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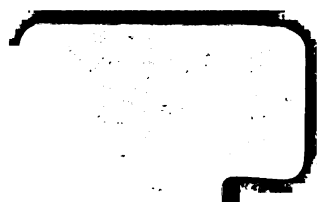
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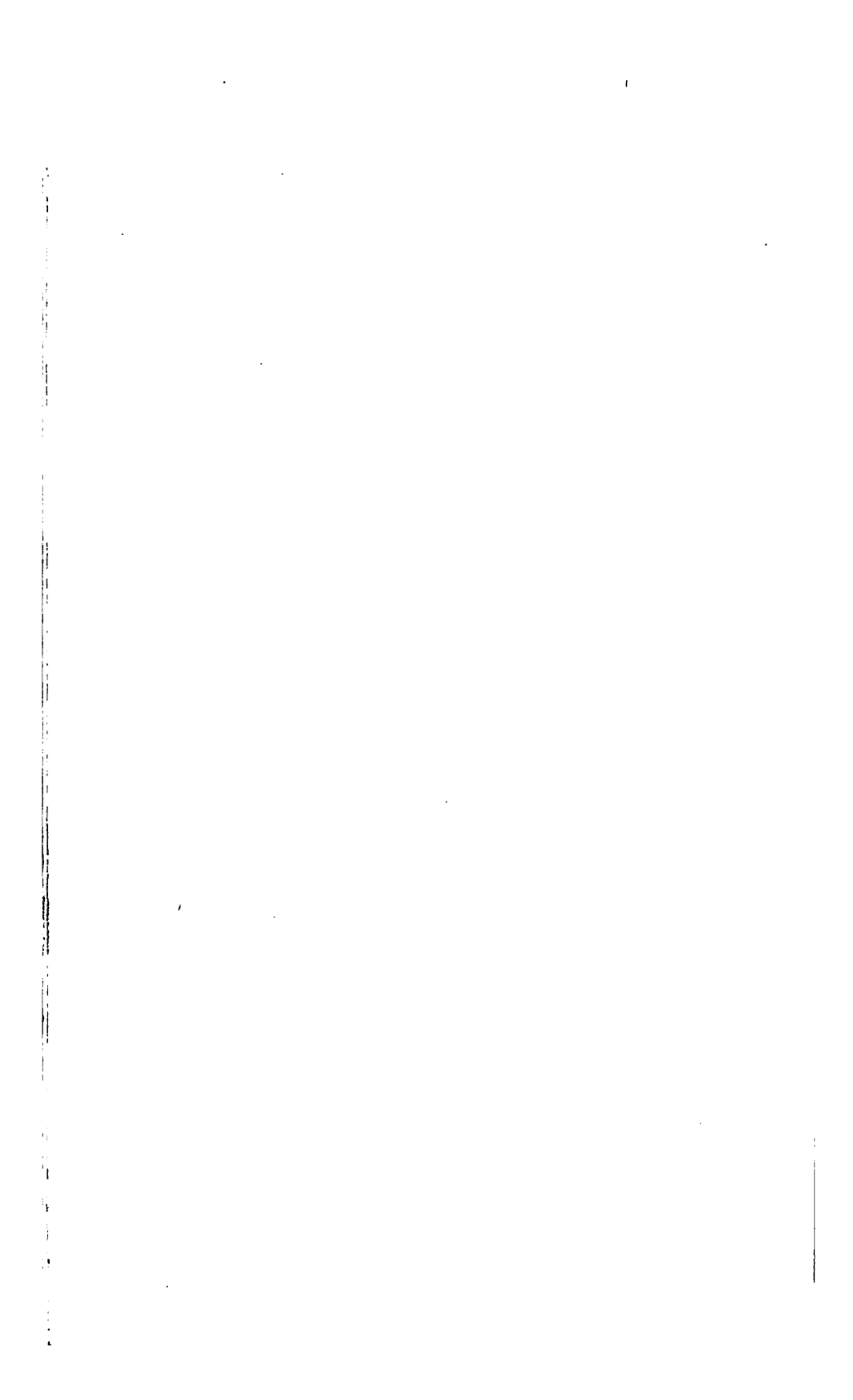
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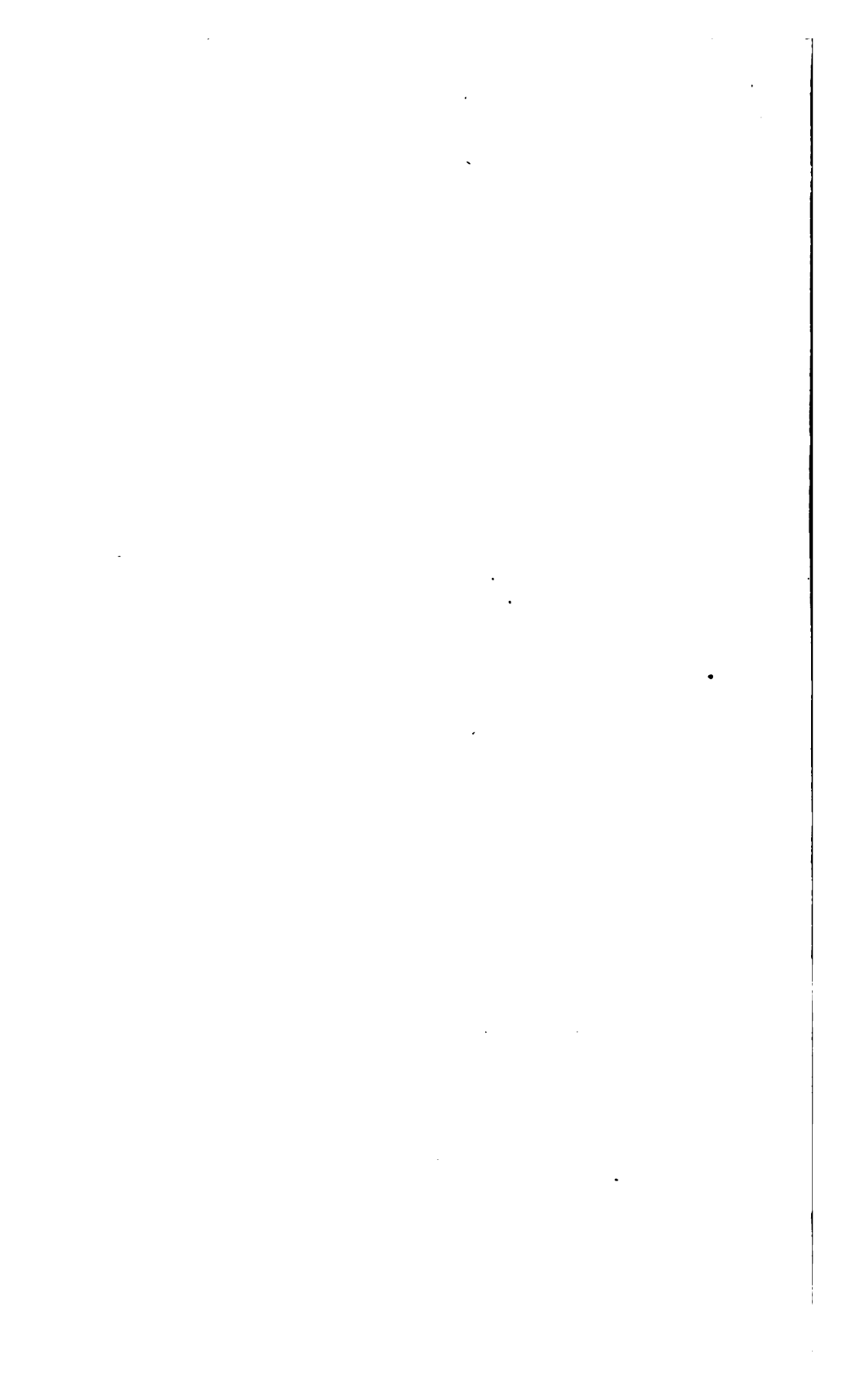


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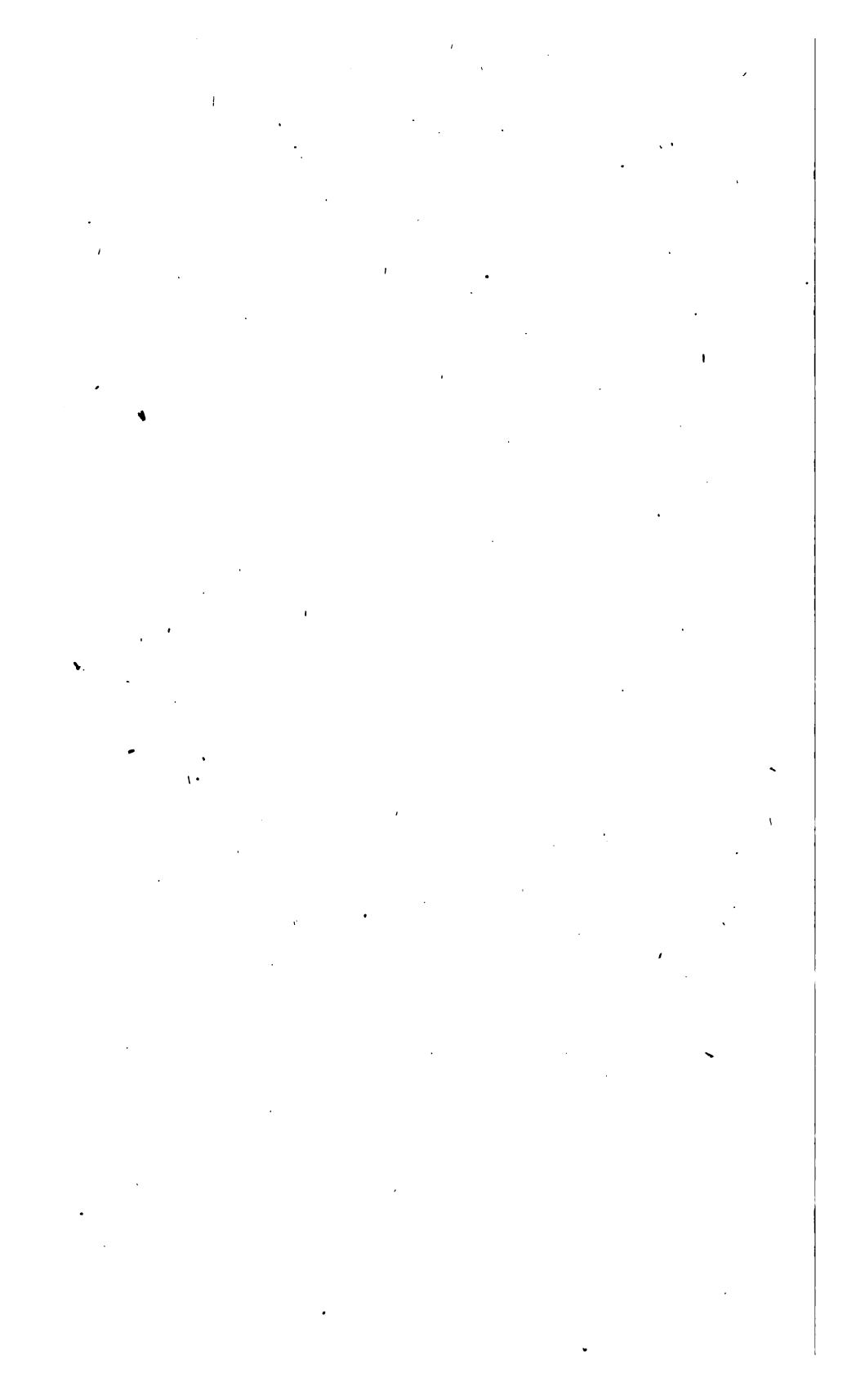


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HISTORY
OF THE
FRENCH REVOLUTION.

BY
D. WEMYSS JOBSON.

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HISTORY

OF THE

FRENCH REVOLUTION.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION.

1. Preliminary Observations.—2. State of Europe.—3. Condition of France ; the Monarchy.—4. The Nobility.—5. The Clergy.—6. The Court.—7. The People.—8. Foreign Relations.—9. The Rising Spirit of Liberty.—10. Influence of French Philosophy.—11. Effect of the American Revolution.—12. Distress of the Treasury.—13. Forerunners of the Revolution.—14. Louis XVI. and Marie Antoinette.—15. The Ministers, Maurepas, Turgot, and Necker.—16. Measures of Necker.—17. Calonne.—18. Conduct of Calonne.—19. The Notables.—20. The Archbishop Brienne.—21. Lamoignon's Scheme.—22. The States-General.—23. Disastrous State of the Country ; terrific Storm in 1788.—24. Eve of the Revolution.

1. ON the approach of the year 1789, affairs as- CHAP.
I.
sumed a new aspect in Europe. The spirit of free-
dom was on the eve of awaking from a slumber of
centuries. Her recent nativity in the new world had Prelimi-
nary Ob-
servations.
rekindled her dormant flame in the old ; the example
of the American States in abjuring British bondage
had evinced the indomitable power with which liberty
nerves a people's arm, and how irresistible is their
energy when excited by a systematic course of op-
pression, or roused into action by the lofty impulse
of their wrongs.

2. In Europe, at this period, scarcely a vestige of State of
Europe.
liberty remained, except in Britain, where she still
maintained her congenial seat, though a gloom hung

CHAP.
I.

over the land, dark as the cloud Omnipotence had cast on the mind of the monarch. In Holland, also, that freedom which the early republicans implanted in the soil, yet in some degree existed, notwithstanding its recent abridgment by an unsuccessful attempt of the States to revolt from the Stadtholder. Switzerland, too, still sheltered it in her rocks and mountains, whose poverty averted tyranny's arm. But all the rest of the Continent lay crushed in the grasp of despotism. Russia was plunged in primeval slavery: liberty had never breathed her inhospitable clime. In Austria, Prussia, and throughout Germany in general, the people, though not in a state of such deep degradation, were, so far as political privileges concerned, in a condition of equal nonentity. Spain and Portugal were sunk in slavish superstition; the glory which for centuries shed a halo on these nations had wholly disappeared; and, under the misguided influence of religion, been succeeded by a bigotry more fatal to liberty than even Scythian ignorance. In Belgium, Norway, and Sweden, freedom was yet unborn. In Greece it was no more; in Italy, but a name: the countries on whose glorious ground liberty so long reigned supreme, had succumbed to the sword of oppression and the rod of the persecutor.

State of
France;
the Mon-
archy.

3. The condition of France was degenerate to the core. Her constitution, originally, like that of most nations, an elective and patriarchal monarchy,* for ages feudal and oppressive,† had, since the time of Louis XI., been almost wholly despotic, and completely so under the fourteenth prince of that name. The glory which encircled the reign of the former monarch and the greater part of the long career of

* Mignet, *Histoire de la Revolution Française*, i. 5, 6; Paris, 1826.

† Gibbon, *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, ii. 121; London, 1820.

the latter, having been in some degree identified with the nation's honour, had reconciled their subjects to that arbitrary sway which they maintained unimpaired to the last. But the splendid tyrant, who, in the seventeenth and eighteenth Centuries, united such meanness as a man with such magnificence as a monarch, had no sooner descended with infamy to the tomb than the Parliament of Paris, previously so abject, began to exhibit the discontent engendered in the country by his long, expensive, and ultimately unsuccessful wars; and even annulled the dying will of the despot.* This dissatisfaction was increased by the weak and flagitious reign of Louis XV.; the profligacy of which was not redeemed by a single ray of honour in the king, or of glory on the kingdom, but marked him as one who, from an innate love for vice and an open contempt of virtue, pursued a career so studiously depraved,† that were not history but a record of human crimes, it would not deign to notice either his life or his death. Nor was the disgrace which the grossness of this royal minion and his mistresses reflected on the country diminished by the licentiousness of Louis XVI's court, though the sovereign himself was pure.

4. The nobles were no longer the high and unbending race of men who, if they tyrannized over their vassals, possessed courage to beard their sovereign. A great number of the peerage had renounced their native dignity, and become the mere creatures of the court; but they still oppressed the people with an iron sway. Though devoid of their ancient spirit they retained their enormous privileges. To them and the clergy two-thirds of the land belonged; and

* Thiers, *Histoire de la Revolution Française*, i. 5; Paris, 1827.

† Bolingbroke's Works, iii. 117; London, 1754.

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I.

were almost exempt from taxation. All the honours of the state were exclusively reserved for the two bodies, and confined to a small number, generally the most vicious, of these. Nobles only could be officers in the army, and enjoy the high employments of civil government. The country swarmed with a hundred thousand high-descended drones;* for nobility comprehended not merely lineal inheritors of titles, but also their kinsmen, and numberless officials or sinecurists, who purchased aristocratic appointments from the court, and thus became entitled to all the rank and exemptions of the order. A wealthy farmer of taxes, or other public servant, no sooner acquired a fortune by peculation from the revenue, than he hastened to secure it by purchasing a patent of nobility; and thus became free of contributions to the state. The nobles, besides, possessed many odious privileges: though the highest places were not beyond their reach, the humblest prey was not beneath their grasp. An English tourist who traversed France before its revolutionary outburst, was joined in the course of his journey by a poor woman in the meridian of life, but bearing all the indications of age. She said, "It was a sad country; her husband had but a morsel of land, a cow, and a famished little horse, to support themselves and seven children; yet they had to pay a *franchar* (42 lbs.) of wheat and three chickens to one noble, four *franchars* of oats and one chicken, with some money to another; besides heavy church dues and state taxes." She entertained some faint hopes of relief, but said not when, and knew not whence. "It was reported that something was to be done by some great folks for such poor ones, but she did not know who, nor how;" "God send us better times,"

* Madame de Stäel, *Œuvres*, ii. 320; Paris, 1837.

she added, "for the taxes crush us to the earth."* CHAP.
I.
 "Oh!" exclaims the amiable traveller, after depicting another still more exquisite scene of woe, "Oh! what have kings, and ministers, and nobles, here to answer for!"† The few aristocrats who lived on their own domains were generally engaged in those grinding oppressions which connect the rich with the indigent;‡ but the greater part of the body were the obsequious slaves of the court, where those fierce conflicts with which their ancestors shook a throne's stability had gradually merged into base contests for the frivolous posts they aspired to obtain, and should have disdained to possess. The titles their forefathers had acquired by pre-eminence of valour were now distinguished chiefly by prominence in folly; and yet all these minions, who insensibly passed from youth to age without displaying either the spirit of the one or the wisdom of the other, were considered noble merely because their progenitors had been men. A few only of all the number stood aloof from this universal degeneracy; or bestowed a thought on alleviating the sufferings of the oppressed. In general the care of the nobility was concentrated in themselves, and bestowed on those fopperies which aid rank to fritter life away. Immersed in private pleasures, they were wholly insensible to those dictates of public principle which so gallantly sustain the patriot amid the vicissitudes of life, and so gracefully support him when summoned by the angel of death.

5. The clergy, the other privileged order in the state, was a formidable phalanx, eighty thousand strong,|| consisting of two classes; one, destined for

The
Clergy.

* Arthur Young, *Travels*, i. 134; Bury St. Edmunds, 1792. † *Ibid.*, p. 84.

‡ Macintosh, *Vindiciæ Gallicæ*, p. 180; London, 1791.

|| Chateaubriand, *Etud. Historiq.*, p. 242; Paris, 1837.

CHAP. I. rich and idle preferments ; the second, to laborious poverty.* The higher benefices of the church were exclusively reserved for the nobles : and those who held them were more distinguished for intrigues at court than devotion in the cloister. Most of the bishops and abbots abjured sacerdotal for secular pursuits ; and numbers possessed great political talents, though generally marred by the chicanery characteristic of churchmen in every age. A few, indeed, had, in this capacity, acquired an European reputation, who, in their dioceses, were known only as keen fleecers of their flocks, and fierce extorters of those tithes which priests so often consider Christianity's sole charm. Servile while seeking, grasping when they obtained office ; insolent to the people, obsequious to the court, these ecclesiastical statesmen commenced their career by shearing the subject, and finished it by ruining the state. The humble clergy were in general praiseworthy ; as poverty precluded them from such temptations, and plebeian birth placed promotion, whether in church or state, beyond their reach. Their utility, however, was counterpoised by a spirit of intolerance which prompted them to decry all sects but their own, and to exact from their followers that passive obedience everywhere so degrading to the human mind, and in France, productive of the fiercest acts of revolutionary violence. In this respect, the illiberality of the humble churchmen equalled the licentiousness of the high. Bigots to their own religion, they recognized not the truth, that all creeds are alike respectable now, and may be equally redemptive hereafter, if the heart be pure and its oblation sincere. Like the nobles they contributed nothing to support the state,

* Mignet, i. 8.

except a slight tax, which pressed chiefly on the poorer orders, who passed a wretched existence in penury, while the superior revelled in wealth. Instead of money, they were supposed to give it the benefit of their prayers,* but this appropriate species of supply afforded no relief to the exhausted treasury. CHAP
I.

6. The court, composed of the nobility and higher clergy, presented a combination of the vices of both. Engaged in idle pageants, or immersed in low debauchery, the one so oppressive to the people, the other so destructive to themselves, the courtiers failed to observe the imperceptible but incessant advance of human thought; and maintained, in the eighteenth century, all the glittering barbarism and feudal opinions of the fifteenth. They considered man as an instrument made for monarchy, not monarchy as an institution created by man; and though the crown was hourly crumbling to dust, they looked on as if regal institutions were subject neither to destruction nor decay. It was not until the foundations were undermined that they suspected the edifice in danger, or awoke to the peril of a throne filled by a king who, in his subjects, inspired no awe, and a queen who had lost their affection. The exhaustion of the source which supplied their profusion gave the first indication of the impending ruin; but a temporary relief having been obtained, they pursued their prodigal career as if still basking in the brightest beams of fortune. A day of dismal suffering had already dawned upon the nation; yet the misery of the people never cost them a sigh or a thought. In the year 1775, a multitude of despairing men and distracted women, impelled by famine, pain, and sorrow, repaired to Versailles, vociferating for relief. In The Court.

* Mignet, i. 9.

CHAP. I. answer to their supplication, two of them were hanged, for experiment of a new gibbet forty feet high.* The rest were sent home to die,—or to live as they might; for them a court had no commiseration, the church no care. Unfed, untaught, unheeded, they knew neither comfort in life, nor consolation in death. The sympathy of a court, and the charity of a church, generally begin at home; and end where they began.

The
People.

7. The people were in a state of abject servitude. All those rights of the nation and forms of the constitution, which alleviated or concealed their feudal degradation, had either been destroyed by violence or impaired by time. Serfdom was impressed on their foreheads in colours indelible as the dye that stains the Ethiop's brow; and millions were born to no inheritance but slavery. One-third only of the land belonged to them, and from this were levied not merely the taxes which supported the state, and tithes to sustain the church, but also oppressive tributes for the nobles. Their sole duty was considered to be submission to this tyranny, and payment of these exactions. Their land could scarcely be deemed their own; it was theirs only for the purpose of contributing to the enjoyment of others. They were permitted to toil, but denied recreation; they were not allowed to hunt or kill the game on their own grounds—it was considered the exclusive property of the nobles; and their territory was either devastated by incessant irruptions of these in pursuit of it, or desolated by wolves and wild boars, whose numbers, preserved for aristocratic pleasure, laid whole provinces in ruin.† Torn from their homes to recruit the army, they had no hope of promotion; for a plebeian, however great in military talent, or pre-emi-

Rural
Population

Military.

* Lacretelle, *Histoire de France*, ii. 454–456; Paris, 1819.

† Arthur Young, i. 48.

nent for personal bravery, could never rise above the rank of a private soldier. Science and industry were almost equally shackled: a man could engage in no art, pursue no profession, until he bought a qualification from the court. The commercial population were not so persecuted, because their efforts to enrich themselves tended to enrich the kingdom; and the one could not be injured without impoverishing the other. But they were exclusively confined to their grade; enterprise however successful, and genius however great, were rewarded with no distinction. Justice was uncertain or polluted. In the country it was generally dispensed by the lords of the soil, subject to corruption or caprice; and if in the towns it flowed from a purer source, it was so dear as to be altogether beyond the attainment of the poor; for the highest judicial offices being openly bought and sold,* the expensive process of its distribution only afforded facility for oppression by the rich. Liberty was unknown; or if mentioned it was only in accents of despair by the people, and of derision by their rulers. Personal freedom was constantly violated by arbitrary arrests;† while public liberty could not be said to exist; as the press was enthralled by a censorship which rigidly excluded all but licentiousness. The people had indeed their ancient Parliaments, whose prerogative was to control the king, and even to annul his edicts; for these had not the force of law unless registered by parliament. But this privilege was more nominal than real. Under even the weakest of their kings it conferred little power, and was easily counteracted either by intrigue or by force; and under such a prince as Louis XIV. who, when parliament remonstrated as a part of the

CHAP.
I.

Urban.

Justice.

Liberty,
Personal,
Public,
and Parlia-
mentary.

* Thiers, i. 19.

† Lettres de Cachet.

CHAP.
I.

state, haughtily replied that "the state was himself;"* it was openly disregarded, and the monarch reigned a despot uncontrolled. On his death, however, the parliaments, which had degenerated into mere tools of tyranny, reiterated these rights; and, under better auspices, contended with the privileged orders for their restoration. The nation, hitherto the willing slave of the sovereign, both in his wars and his pleasures, was now exhausted by long hostilities; and indulging in repose, with the reflection it brings, the people began to regard these struggles with attention, and to discern the germs of freedom they contained. But the court viewed with indifference such signs of discontent; and while it obtained money for expenditure, cared little for a strife in which the combatants displayed more animosity against each other than towards itself. In expectation of their mutual exhaustion, by which it hoped to profit,† the government foresaw not that the mass of mankind must eventually triumph; and forgot that monarchy may die, a church will decay, and a peerage perish, but the people exist for ever.

Foreign
Relations.

8. While the country was in this state of discontent and degradation at home, its honour was equally tarnished abroad. The military glory which attended the outset of Louis XIV's reign, had wholly disappeared towards its decline; and the defeats her arms then sustained had not been redeemed by any subsequent successful achievements; unless the assistance she bestowed on England's revolted colonies be reckoned in the number. And if it were deemed so by those who enthusiastically hailed the dawn of liberty in America, they considered the honour then acquired by France to have been effaced by that feebleness

* Bolingbroke, iii. 57.

† Mignet, i. 17.

the government afterwards displayed in allowing Holland to be overrun by a Prussian army, and Poland to be overwhelmed by Russia.* The French army, meanwhile, was brave as ever. Hopeless servitude had not extinguished the spirit of the soldiers; though the rule which imposed nobility as a qualification, had nearly expelled talent from command: and both it and the nation panted to recover their lost station in Europe. But though the troops were formidable, their head was powerless: and possessed even less authority than when Frederick the Great, in contempt of the French monarch's abject pusillanimity, exclaimed that "were he king of France, not a shot should be fired on the Continent without his will."

9. A British poet commemorates in stately strains CHAP. I
 "The might that slumbers in a peasant's arm;"† The rising Spirit of Liberty.

but there is a nobler power, which neither sleeps nor slumbers, in the human breast—a passion for liberty, conveyed from the cradle and carried to the tomb. In every age a hatred of oppression has been implanted in the soul of man; divine in its origin, enduring as his existence. The highest are not beyond its influence, nor the humblest beneath its inspiration. It is coeval with creation, and destined to be contemporaneous with its fall. All living beings yield to its dictates: the same sense which impels the meanest reptile to recoil on the foot that spurns, excites the mightiest animal to revolt against the hand that strikes it. In man, a spirit such as this recognises not time, condition, nor place: though silent in the bosom of the slave, its existence is inherent as in that of the freeman; and the power which is but dormant in Siberia's serfs, now animated the sons of France, with a flame glowing as that

* Thiers, i. 25.

† Campbell, Pleasures of Hope, part 1.

CHAP. which once illumined the hills of Rome and plains of
I. Greece.

Influence
of French
Philoso-
phy.

10. The works of Voltaire, Rousseau, and other French philosophers—those deathless productions which hypocrisy condemns, but history will consecrate, which strip priestcraft of its cunning, and tyranny of its cloak—contributed to fan the flame. Though the first of these illustrious men was a sceptic in religion, the second a visionary in politics, and the greater part of their followers substituted superficial sophistry for sublime philosophy, they all taught the mind to respect no antiquated institution which reason rejects, and to reject no modern innovation which reason reveres. And as time, which destroys groundless opinions, but confirms rational reflections,* had partially corroborated their principles, and left truth established after illusion disappeared, their influence became great; for in the end men of meditation govern the world; and however neglected while living, attain supremacy when dead. Reflection generally gives way to action, and the pen yields to the sword, in present importance; but the lustre of the philosopher brightens when the laurels of the conqueror fade. The power of a writer begins when that of the warrior ends, and though war had for centuries been identified with the national character of France, its inhabitants were now subdued by that mental charm which submits centuries to reason's eye. True philosophy, however, was soon replaced by erring speculation; and the government, through blind confidence in its own stability, or the Machiavellic policy of injuring another state, encouraged the wildest abstract schemes, without surmising their possible

* *Opinionum commenta delet dies, naturæ judicia confirmat.*—Cicero, *De Nat. Deor. lib. ii.*

application to itself. Liberty in Philadelphia was extolled, while not a vestige existed in Paris: and court minions chaunted hymns to the freedom of another country, who never breathed its air in their own.

CHAP.
I.

11. The conduct of the Court of France during the American Revolution,—so unjust to a kingdom, but so useful to mankind,* so treacherous to another sovereign, and so fatal to its own,—recoiled with rapid retribution. In an hour more evil for himself, than for the monarch from whom he helped to wrench a nobler ealm, the French king concurred with his cabinet in the ungenerous impulse to humble a rival power; and sent assistance to Britain's revolted colonies, without reflecting that by contributing to overturn the throne of a brother sovereign he undermined his own. He discovered with regret,† when regret was unavailing, that in aiding to establish one republic he unconsciously laid the foundation of another; and displayed the weakness of a mind, inconsistent, if not insincere, by crushing democracy at home while he fomented it abroad. Foreign treachery is appropriately succeeded by domestic tyranny. In the hour when his court was celebrating the arrival of Franklin, America's illustrious ambassador, he launched an edict to exclude all officers from the army, who could not shew nobility for four generations.‡ But this insane attempt was abortive, and only accelerated the revolution it was designed to avert. All rational men received it with indignation; and it was not likely to make the impression desired on the minds of Lafayette and the band of gallant adventurers who shared in the dangers of the

Effect of
the Ameri-
can Revolu-
tion.

* Chateaubriand, *Œuvres*, i. 257; Paris, 1837.

† Burke's *Works*, ii. 316; London, 1834.

‡ Camp u, *Memoires de*, i. 223; London, 1823.

CHAP. American War, and on its termination returned home,
 I. ambitious of honour, and deserving of distinction,
 determined to live in freedom or to die with glory.

Distress
 of the
 Treasury.

12. But though native philosophy and foreign strife excited the inflammable mass, the poverty of the government was the immediate cause of combustion. The treasury was destitute of those resources which in days of modern degeneracy constitute both the power of an individual, and the strength of a nation. Exhausted by the victories of one war, and the reverses of another; the first producing no gain, the second no glory; the financial distress gradually increasing from the era of Louis XIV., had now attained a crisis equally difficult for the government to alleviate, and for the people to endure. The annual deficiency in the revenue amounted to eight millions sterling,* though the subjects groaned under imposts, and the state under debt. In this period of destitution a new power sprung up, whose voice was unheard in the hour of prosperity. The nation groaned, and parliament re-echoed its murmurs in accents which caused the most heedless to ponder. Louis XV., though devoted to sensuality alone, observed the approach of that struggle which should assign to a monarchy those limits of existence, prescribed by nature to the meanest under regal sway. But too selfish to abandon his prodigal career, he only confirmed the rising opinion that, as government is an institution created by human wisdom to protect human weakness, and provide for human wants,† on the whole that is the best which shields its subjects most, and costs them least.

Forerun-
 ners of the
 Revolution

13. Such was the state of France when that star

* Necker, *Compte Rendu*, *passim*; Paris, 1789; and Mignet, i. 27.

† Burke's *Reflections*, &c., i. 403.

of revolution arose, which was destined so long to blaze on her horizon ; purifying her political atmosphere, but blighting almost all on whom it shone ; destroying her ancient monarchy, and one of the weakest kings that ever sat upon her throne. Though it fell like a thunder shaft on this bewildered prince, the impending danger had long been apparent. A superficial English nobleman,* nearly forty years before, proclaimed its advent, with a certainty which in some degree removes the ridicule attached to political prediction. Even Louis XV. foresaw its approach ; but too heartless to be affected by a peril which could endanger only his distant offspring, he attempted neither to avert its course, nor to alleviate its fury, and, satisfied if the monarchy endured his time, the royal rake merely exclaimed " Let my grandson beware."†

CHAP.
I.

14. Louis XVI., when he ascended the throne of his ancestors, was in the flower of his youth, and possessed many qualities which might have rendered him acceptable, both as a man and as a monarch, had it been his fate to have lived in less excited times. A royal education, which cultured no talent, had not deteriorated an inherently mild disposition ; nor had the profligacy of the court, in which he was brought up, contaminated his natural inclination to virtue. Ardently devoted to his queen, the beautiful and brilliant, but unfortunate Marie Antoinette, he readily yielded to that ascendancy which her aspiring and energetic mind could not fail to acquire over one so ductile as his own ; and the sentiments she entertained were but little in unison with those of the nation. Inured from her infancy to the despotic

Louis XVI.

and Marie
Antoinette.

* Lord Chesterfield, Letters, &c., Dec. 25, 1753.

† Madame de Stäel, Considerations sur la Rev. Franc., c. 3.

CHAP.
1.

principles of Austria, she could ill brook the new feelings that were bursting on the majority of her adopted country : and the vivacity of an inconsiderate temper naturally induced her to join in the dissipated gaiety of the minority. Louis, alternately swayed by his wife and the minister Maurepas, received from the one those absolute ideas of regal power, which he always retained ;* and from the other that vacillating inclination which he never renounced.† The king thus in the outset of his reign displayed those principles of high prerogative which gave rise to his subjects' complaints, and exhibited that irresolute character which became the source of his own calamities. Accessible alike to good and evil counsel,‡ he was destitute of the decision, useful in all, but indispensable in momentous times ; and incapable of distinguishing between the merit of timely concession, and the odium of undue resistance. His early concessions to the just demands of the people were generally conferred in a tone of arrogant condescension or insulting menace, and invariably neutralized by the influence of the court ; and when the period arrived for repressing their destructive exactions, his constitutional timidity prevented him from opposing the requisite resistance. Had he lived in a tranquil age, he might have been a popular king in France, and in any country have earned that designation of " Father of the People," which sovereigns so often assume, and so seldom deserve : the annals of his reign would have been tiresome,§ and the voice of history unheard. But in the eventful era when he ascended the throne, any amiable quality he possessed, tended

* Madame de Stäel, *Considerations*, &c., c. 21.

† Bertrand de Molleville, *Hist. de la Rev. de France*, i. 65-68 ; Paris, 1801.

‡ Mignet, i. 59.

§ " Happy," says Montesquieu, " are the people whose annals are tedious !"

only to accelerate the destruction of himself, and the advent of those calamities that overwhelmed his country. CHAP.
I.

15. The minister Maurepas, an old courtier to whom Louis first committed the reins of government, pursued that temporizing policy which averts no eventual evil; and having excited the distrust of the court, by appointing popular coadjutors, as well as lost the confidence of the people by abjuring popular principles, he was driven from office by the united impulse of both. Turgot, a disciple of the great Sully, succeeded to his place. The new premier was a man simple in his habits, upright in his conduct, firm and profound, but not brilliant; yet possessing capacity to discern abuses, and courage to redress them. Sincerely attached to the great body of the nation, he was revered by it in return; and as Louis, whose fluctuating character varied with every change in his ministry, at first strenuously supported him, he entered on a course of reformation with alacrity. But he was thwarted in all his measures by the court and nobility, to whom such a man became odious, in proportion as he grew popular; and the king yielding to their instigation, discharged the minister whom, a short time before, he described as the only one in his dominions, besides himself, friendly to the people.* Turgot quitted office with a character which popular applause could not elevate, nor patrician envy debase; and the courtiers, by driving away the minister, effectually destroyed their master. He was succeeded by Necker, a Genevese, who had amassed a large fortune as a banker, and in a private station excited hopes which he never realized in public. Possessing integrity, and not

* Thiers, i. 37.

CHAP. I. destitute of ability, but without the mental grasp and profundity of his predecessor, this official was vain, approaching to weakness; affected moderation in every measure, and information on every subject; believed he was able to control the course of events, when in reality he was only carried along by the current.

Measures. of Necker. 16. Financial talent, and the confidence he inspired in capitalists, constituted Necker's chief recommendation. By these means he temporarily restored order in the treasury, and hope to the nation: while his greater flexibility rendered him less repugnant than Turgot to the court. But his measures were temporizing, and provided only for the transient hour. More decisive acts were necessary to recruit the exhausted treasury. When loans could no longer be raised, it became imperative to reduce the extravagance of the courtiers; and as his propositions were then equally unacceptable with those of the other, he was opposed and obliged to retire; after shewing an aptitude for narrow details,* and unfitness for great conceptions, more worthy of a steward than a statesman, more becoming in a money-changer than in the controller of a nation.

Calonne. 17. The next minister was Calonne, an able man, but without either private or public principle; superficial, yet brilliant, and fruitful in resources; of a bold ardent temper, great eloquence, and still greater confidence. Though he neither enjoyed nor deserved popularity, these qualifications, more dazzling than solid, rendered his assumption of power by no means disagreeable to the country, while his fascinating manners made him acceptable to the court, and his plausible proposals excited confidence in the credulous

* Macintosh's Vind. Gall., p. 30; and Mignet, i. 39.

king, who was now growing sensible to the perils of his situation, and to the sufferings of his subjects. CHAP.
I.

Louis's mental distress, arising from either source, was great, and daily increased. He in vain attempted to alleviate the burdens of the nation by reducing his own expenditure: such reductions, though considerable, were wholly ineffectual, and generally counteracted by the courtiers who surrounded the queen.

18. Meanwhile the state of the treasury grew desperate under the auspices of Calonne, who, reversing the system of Necker, substituted expense for economy, in the vain expectation of promoting industry; and profusion for parsimony, with the still vainer hope of allaying discontent.* In a few years, loans had been raised to the amount of sixteen hundred and forty-six millions of francs (£55,840,000); and yet these, with the whole amount of the taxes, were insufficient for the current expenditure. The public coffers were empty, and it was impossible to replenish them by new imposts on a people already groaning under existing burdens, and rapidly awakening to a sense of their wrongs as well as of their rights. A deep impression of abuse, and determination to resist it, were now universal, not only in the lower ranks, but also amongst those of the nobility and clergy who were independent of the court. This originally inconsiderable body was now daily augmented by the reductions in the royal household; the persons thus dismissed adding clamours which sprang from private motives, to those raised under the impulse of patriotism. Still the government expenditure required to be provided; and Calonne, seeing the people alike unable and unwilling to support fresh ex-

Conduct of
Calonne.

* Alison's History of Europe, i. 101; Edinburgh, 1833.

CHAP. actions, first attempted to supply it by suppressing
I. court bounties: but finding this relief inadequate, necessity impelled him to a patriotic course, and he determined to levy contributions from the privileged orders, hitherto exempted from taxation.

**The
Notables.**

19. With this view he summoned the Notables, an assembly of the chief nobles, clergy, and magistrates of the kingdom. A similar suggestion had previously been made by Turgot and Necker; but abandoned, partly through the influence of the court, which dreaded innovation, and partly in despair, by the ministers themselves, who foresaw the improbability of submission to an impost. The king now sincerely concurred in the proposal which Calonne, though no longer sanguine, considered the sole remedy for the national disasters. The event justified the minister's anticipations; he met the assembly with apparent confidence; displayed equal address and eloquence in the submission of his measures; detailed the exhaustion of the treasury on his advent to power, and followed the immemorial official rule, by ascribing it to his predecessors; especially to Necker, whose reply was so unsatisfactory that he was sent into exile. But this triumph was short in duration; Calonne no sooner disclosed his intention to raise supplies by a territorial tax, than the assembly, whose finances it would affect, opposed, and demanded his dismissal; to which the king assented, though not without regret; and Calonne, retiring into England, pursued by the maledictions of a nation which he hurried to ruin, and vainly attempted to save, is no longer heard of in history.

Brienne.

20. It was the misfortune of Louis XVI. to change his government alternately at the dictation of the courtiers, or the caprice of his councils; and each

minister was generally followed by a more worthless successor. Calonne, dismissed on the instant his conduct became praiseworthy, was replaced by Brienne, archbishop of Toulouse, who, when out of office, had violently attacked his rival's measures; and adopted them immediately on entering it. The new premier was one of those aspiring priests who, by base intrigue and baser superstition, acquired paramount authority over the court; and obtained the control of a kingdom, without possessing a single qualification to govern men in this world, or guide them to the next. Weak, headstrong, and ambitious, unscrupulous and daring in the conception of his plans, but feeble and vacillating in their execution; he entered on his measures without penetration or reflection, and abandoned them without perseverance or regret. Female influence and chicanery were the instruments by which he gained elevation, and by such unworthy means he trusted to maintain it. Yet on his entrance into power he was in some degree popular; chiefly in consequence of having displaced Calonne, who had become the object of a hatred as strong as latterly it was unmerited, and, like him, he at first found the control of the Notables easy; because in their eagerness to remove his predecessor, they even pledged themselves to consent to his proposals.* A decree for the institution of a land-tax, and another for the abrogation of the *corvées*, a species of personal servitude which pressed heavily on the rural population, were accordingly passed without interruption; and other acts for the relief of the country might have been adopted by the assembly, if urged by the minister with resolution. But the zeal he displayed on acceding to authority was soon relaxed; and

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I.

* Mignet, i. 25.

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I.

in proportion as it subsided, the opposition of the privileged orders increased. Their representatives in the parliament of Paris rejected the most important of his measures when submitted for confirmation ; and declared that a territorial tribute could be imposed only by the states-general, or congregated assembly of all classes in the nation. The nobles and clergy, by thus refusing on pretence of patriotism to tax themselves, produced the revolution.

Lamoignon's
Scheme.

21. The words *states-general* were no sooner uttered than they spread throughout the country with electric rapidity ; and all orders concurred in demanding the convocation of this body, which had not assembled since the year 1614. Brienne in vain attempted to stifle the cry by banishing the parliament which gave it birth ; and, under his auspices, Lamoignon, the keeper of the seals, with equal futility, devised a scheme to avoid the meeting of the states, as well as annul the power of the parliament, by instituting a *cour pleniére*, or selection from the leading orders in the kingdom, who should act as a substitute for the one, and supplant all but the judicial functions of the other. Preparations for this despotic design were made with equal activity and secrecy. Artisans were employed day and night at the royal press in multiplying copies of a charter, to be distributed throughout the country ; and a regiment of guards surrounded the building to prevent all publicity till the plan should be ready for promulgation. But wherever a secret exists there is danger of discovery ; and discovery invariably defeats such designs. The parliament, equally with the inhabitants of Paris, were filled with vague apprehensions ; and the possession of a copy of the proposed institution, which D'Espremenil, one of their members, obtained by cor-

rupting a workman, was not calculated to diminish their alarm. They immediately passed resolutions intended at once to anticipate, and avert the invasion of their privileges. The government in vain tried to terrify them by apprehending the patriotic member ; his fellow-senators, when a military officer entered to arrest, refused to betray him, and exclaimed, " We are all D'Espremenils : " * and though the deputy, with Monsambert, an associate compromised, devotedly disclosed himself, to terminate a captivity in which the whole assembly was held for twenty hours by a troop of dragoons, the spirit of the others remained unsubdued. The nation supported the parliament, and the minister soon discovered that though a king may confer power, the voice of a kingdom alone can confirm it. After a protracted struggle with the refractory members, in which he alternately employed mean negociation and arrogant menace, without evincing either dignity in the one or determination in the other, Brienne succumbed, and retired to obscurity, laden with the plunder and execration of an indignant country. Louis, in appointing his successor, complied with the wishes of his people ; Necker was recalled from banishment ; and, by his financial resources, order was temporarily restored ; all parties anticipating relief from the assemblage of the states-general.

22. This important body was composed of three branches ; the nobles, the clergy, and third estate, or commons, comprehending the provincial magistrates, those engaged in law and commerce, farmers, and other classes of the people. Analogous to the British parliament in its origin and design, the states-general had gradually sunk into an assembly of slaves,

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I.

The States
General.

* Besenval, Memoires de, iii. 355 ; Paris, 1805.

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I.

summoned in periods of distress, to grant subsidies to the monarch.* The government of France, however, had been so long despotic, that its subjects had not, during nearly two centuries, been congregated even for this degrading object; and considerable doubts existed as to the mode of constituting an assembly so long in desuetude, but now evidently destined to perform a momentous part. In former meetings the third estate was sometimes the same in number with each of the others; at other periods it equalled both united. But, as the three branches then voted separately, the numbers of the popular division were immaterial; as it was invariably neutralized by the privileged orders, and thus deprived of all importance. Now, however, it became a subject of weighty debate whether the commons should only equal each of the others in number, and vote in the same chamber; or be strong as both united, and act separately, as in the British legislature. The increased importance of the popular branch, which possessed a large share of the country's wealth, and a still larger of its intelligence, demanded increased representation; and increase were futile unless in a single assembly. Yet, on the other hand, the gravity of legislation and the necessity of arresting rash resolutions, required a second chamber for due deliberation. In a meeting of the Notables, it was resolved that the commons should only equal the clergy and nobles in number, and that each order should observe the ancient custom of voting by itself. But this resolution was annulled by the government; which doubled the third estate, in expectation of at once acquiring popularity, and resenting the obduracy displayed by the privileged orders. The court and these

* Bailly, *Memoires de*, i. 118; Paris, 1796.

were thus in collision : and Necker, who knew not how to lessen future danger by removing present difficulties, leaving the important question of a separate chamber undecided, originated all the calamities that followed.*

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I.

23. The minister secured his aim, by obtaining a transient breath of popular applause ; and the court even entertained hopes of enlisting the commons in the contest which subsisted between the privileged orders and itself ; but the first was ephemeral, and the other delusive. The tranquillity so established was ominous as the calm which precedes the tempest. Extreme discontent and suffering prevailed throughout the nation. The former had already produced those memorable clubs, which afterwards exerted an influence so fatal to the country. The latter was caused by a famine greater than any since the end of Louis XIV's reign, the result of a hurricane surpassing in violence all experienced for centuries. In midsummer 1788, a furious tornado and terrific hail-storm burst forth, which swept the harvest from the fields, destroyed the vintage in the ground ; laid some of the fairest provinces in ruins, and, in an hour, produced such desolation that the weak who witnessed, believed it the forerunner of the final day ; and even strong minds regarded its effect with dismay.

Disastrous
State of the
Country ;

Terrific
Storm in
June, 1788.

24. Such were the gloomy omens under which the year 1788 closed in France : the elements themselves seeming to forebode the political storm that followed. But the world has less to dread from elemental than from human convulsions ; and terrible as the conflicts of nature are, they were infinitely less devastating than those about to arise amongst men.

Eve of the
Revolution

* Napoleon, in Bourrienne, *Memoires de*, &c. viii. 108-9 ; Paris, 1832.

CHAPTER II.

THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY.

1. Approach of the Revolution.—2. The Elections for the States-General; Reveillon Riot in Paris.—3. Provincial Elections; Mirabeau.—4. The States-General.—5. Opening of the States.—6. The King's Speech.—7. Dissension of the Orders, and Formation of National Assembly.—8. Alarm of the Nobles; Commons meet in Tennis-Court.—9. The folly of the Court; the King's infatuated Speech.—10. Conduct of the Assembly; Speech of Mirabeau.—11. Entrance of De Brezè.—12. Speech of Barnave.—13. The Nobles Subdued.—14. Insubordination of the French Guards.—15. Dismissal of Necker, and Designs of the Court.—16. Conduct of the Assembly.—17. Massacre of the populace by the Prince of Lambesc.—Origin of the National Guards and Tricoloured Flag.—18. Acts of the Assembly.—19. Insurrection in Paris.—20. Assault on the Bastile.—21. Its Siege.—22. And Capture.—23. Conduct of the Court.—24. Acts of the Assembly; Speech of Mirabeau.—25. Reconciliation of the King and Assembly.—26. Joy in Paris.—27. First Stage of the Revolution accomplished.—28. Second Stage of the Revolution.—29. Riots in Paris; Murders of Foulon and Berthier.—30.—Disturbances in the Provinces; the Mesmai Explosion.—31. Acts of the Assembly; Decree of Rights of Man.—32. The New Constitution.—33. The King's Veto.—34. Threatened National Bankruptcy; Averted by Mirabeau.—35. Designs of Mirabeau.—36. Feast of the Body Guards.—37. Insurrection in consequence.—38. Outburst at Versailles.—39. Arrival of Lafayette.—40. Attack on the Palace, and removal of the Court to Paris.—41. Emigration, and Conduct of the Emigrants.—42. Character of the Duke of Orleans.—43. Decline of Mirabeau, and Sieyes.—44. Reform of the Church.—45. Conspiracy and Condemnation of Favras.—46. Constitutional Oath.—47. Conduct of the Court, and corruption of Mirabeau.—48. His Character.—49. The Jacobin Club; the Feuillans.—50. Celebration of the Constitution.—51. Revolt of the Military at Metz and Nanci.—52. Abolition of Nobility; Final Retirement and Character of Necker.—53. Designs and Death of Mirabeau.—54. Epitome of his Life.—55. Consequences of his death; King's contemplated Flight.—56. Flight of the Royal Family to Varennes.—57. Their Return to Paris.—58. The Consequences of.—59. Dissolution of the Assembly.—60. Its Character and Conduct.

CHAP.
II.

1. THE year 1789 dawned with a threatening aspect. Everything foreboded revolution, which it was now evident might be protracted, but could not be averted. The country was slumbering on a volcano, whose

1789-1791.

eruption alone could eradicate the enormous abuses accumulated by the misrule of ages.

CHAP.
II.

2. In the midst of this gloom the elections for the states-general took place. Those in Paris were followed by a riot, which, originally confined to an artisan and his operatives, eventually assumed a political aspect, and involved hundreds in blood. By the delay of the government, which lost in hesitation hours that should have been devoted to action, the rioters were reinforced by the restless poor, who abound in all cities, especially in excited times; to whom the past and present are known only by the recollection, or endurance of suffering, and the future alone presents any hope of relief; who seldom experience aught of life but its bitterness, and still more rarely discern escape from individual misery, except through general calamity. Though temporarily subdued, these soon reappeared as a formidable body of brigands, consisting chiefly of labourers discharged from the interrupted public works, for the most part without a character or home.* They were supposed to be secretly organized at the expense of the Duke of Orleans, the first prince of the blood, yet inveterate foe of the court; and they enabled him to triumph over his enemies, but in the end overwhelmed himself.

1789.

The Election in Paris, and
Reveillon
Riot.

3. In the provinces the elections proceeded still more tumultuously, and amidst their uproar, uprose Mirabeau, the most memorable actor in the revolutionary era. Born of a noble family, this celebrated man had in childhood been the object of a father's inconceivable neglect, and in youth, of his equally unnatural persecution. Such treatment aroused feelings of indignation in a mind naturally haughty and unbending,

Provincial
Elections;
Mirabeau.

* Mignet, i. 76.

CHAP. as well as proud with the consciousness of power ;
 II. and engendered that hatred of despotism which he

1789. through life retained. Driven from his native roof, and pursued with ceaseless vengeance by a father, who yet assumed the title of " Friend of Man,"* he had for years alternately wandered as an outlaw, from which he received self-reliance ; or been incarcerated in dungeons, where solitude nurtured his genius, and adversity taught him to know mankind, as well as (better still) to know himself. Passions, originally strong, when thus excited, led to irregularities equally great, exceeding even the habitual license of French nobles, and, as in the vices of the elevated, rendered more prominent by pre-eminent talent. With infirmities undoubted and inherent as his genius, Mirabeau now re-appeared in France, a candidate to represent his natural order in the state ; but indignantly rejected by the nobles for the boldness of his opinions, he retorted with haughty defiance, and at once threw himself into the arms of the people, by whom he was ardently welcomed, and elected a member of the commons. In their ranks he accordingly enrolled himself ; and as a popular deputy repaired to Paris, panting to redress his country's wrongs ; his resentment of public injuries being probably inflamed by the recollection of private insults, hard to endure, and harder to forget.

The States
 General.

4. The elections having terminated, preparations were made for the assembly of the states. While they proceeded, the court made no attempt to influence the suffrages ; as it expected the commons would naturally resist the nobles, and rally round the throne ;† but on their conclusion, when the privileged orders exerted themselves to obtain the support of

* *Memoires de Mirabeau, passim* ; Paris, 1834. † Mignet, i. 38.

their subordinates, the courtiers resorted to similar efforts. With this view the deputies of the third estate were assailed with abject adulation when present; though attacked by baser derision in their absence.* The rusticity of some, and the avocations of others—a large number of whom were provincial lawyers,†—might have afforded subject for sarcasm, or inspired reason for distrust; but the great majority of the members were firm and enlightened men, who stood aloof alike from the snares of the peerage, and smiles of the court; and were neither to be gained by flattery nor coerced by fear.

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II.

1789.

5. On the 4th of May, 1789, the king and states-general proceeded, in great pomp, to the cathedral church of Notre Dame, where the bishop of Nancy delivered an eloquent oration, intended to produce harmony, which the court, with its usual inconsistency, had already contrived to dispel. In compliance with some idle rule of etiquette, the commons were treated with marked inferiority, while the nobles and clergy received conspicuous distinction.‡ The greater number of the third estate sustained this indignity with silent disdain; but the saturnine aspect of Robespierre, the cynical countenance of Marat, and haughty air of Danton, evinced how deeply it wounded others; while Mirabeau, in the midst of his plebeian associates, displayed the suppressed indignation of a man whom the fiat of a court could neither honour nor degrade.

Opening of
the States.

6. The speech with which Louis opened the states was ill calculated to allay this hostile impression. His profuse professions of affection for the people were delivered in a tone of constrained condescension and covert menace,§ which gave rise to a surmise of insincerity in the one, and of weakness in the other.

The King's
Speech.

* Mignet, i. 39. † Burke, i. 397. ‡ Thiers, i. 53. § Macintosh, i. 49.

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II.

1789.

He expressed his gratification at meeting them in terms of exaggerated joy, which his tone belied. "A long interval," he said, "had elapsed since the last convocation of the states, but though they had been discontinued by his more recent predecessors, he was not on that account dissuaded from re-establishing an institution fraught, as he anticipated, with new vigour and increased prosperity to the nation. The public debt, immense on his accession to the throne, had, he confessed, been increased under his reign; but he represented an expensive war as the cause, an augmentation of the taxes as the consequence, and to the unequal levy of these he attributed the existing discontent. He hoped that the disposition which, in his opinion, the two chief orders had shewn, to renounce their pecuniary privileges, would allay this dissatisfaction; and stated his repugnance to the prevailing desire for innovation, which he wished to see repressed. He took credit for ordering considerable retrenchments, as sovereigns often do; but admitted the attempt was futile, as they are seldom able to deny. He followed the immemorial example of parading anxiety to relieve his subjects, and made the equally everlasting profession of inability to achieve his desire. But this was an evil which he expected the states to redress; a remedy for the financial disorder was, he considered, the object most worthy of their attention; and to himself he chiefly trusted for allaying the general ferment." "I know" he said "the authority and power of a just king, surrounded by an attached people; they have been the source of the glory and splendour of France, and I shall ever, as I ought, maintain them." This compliment of doubtful sincerity to his subjects, mingled with one of unquestioned good faith to himself, raised

an unhappy impression, which was not dispelled by his subsequent assurance, that whatever could be anticipated from the most tender solicitude, and sincere friendship for the people, might be expected from him. He concluded by alleging that his wishes by day, and his prayers by night, were aspirated for their harmony; but haughtily adding "the keeper of the seals will more fully explain my intentions, and I have ordered the director of the finances to inform you of the state of the kingdom,"* he ungraciously withdrew.

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II.

1789.

7. Dissensions arose in the states-general on the second day of their assembly. The commons desired the presence of the nobles and clergy, for the verification of their authority; a preliminary inquiry into the validity of the elections, which constituted the first act of the session. But the others refused compliance, and in their own chambers verified themselves; partly from motives of disdain to associate with the third estate,† and still more from apprehension lest their attendance at one meeting should establish a precedent for a single chamber.‡ From request the commons quickly proceeded to demand, and the nobles as rapidly passed from refusal to defiance. Both parties being equally obdurate, several weeks were passed in stormy debates, or fierce recriminations; and more time might have been lost but for the decisive energy of Mirabeau, who conjured his fellow-senators to persist, and concluded a glowing speech by solemnly invoking the clergy, "in the name of God and of peace," to join the representatives of the people.§ His eloquence, too theatrical for classic taste, too declamatory for English,

Dissension
of the
Orders.

* State Papers, Dodsley's Annual Register for 1789, xxxi. 328.

† Mignet, i. 49.

‡ Lacretelle, vii. 29.

§Thiers, i. 61.

CHAP. fell on the susceptible minds of his countrymen, like
 II. the sound of the trumpet on the ear of the war-horse.

1789. A number of the humbler clergy, whose sympathies were for the most part in unison with the people, shewed immediate indications of yielding, and the majority having shortly afterwards resolved to follow their example, the commons determined to execute their mission without waiting for the nobles ; verified themselves ; and, on the motion of the deputy Legrand, assumed the designation of National Assembly.*

Formation
of National
Assembly.

Alarm of
the Nobles.

8. The court and nobility were now alarmed. The former desired the separation of the orders, in the hope of acquiring power by their discord ;† the latter, in expectation of retaining its privileges by resistance ; and this desertion by the clergy was equally destructive to both. The hall in which the commons assembled was in vain shut up to prevent the contemplated union. Finding their chamber occupied by a military guard, the new assembly proceeded in quest of another, attended by their president, Bailly, an illustrious philosopher, whose determined conduct and inflexible character proved that abstract habits and scientific studies are not, as vulgarly supposed, incompatible with resolution and energy in the hour of need. After wandering some time during a torrent of rain, subjected to the sneers of the courtiers, but sustained by the sympathy of the people, and by a sense of their duty as well as self-approbation, as they were repulsed from the door of one public building to another, the patriotic senators at last found shelter in a tennis-court ; and there, amidst the fury of a tempest which imparted additional solemnity to the scene, protested against the violation of their rights, and swore not to

Commons
meet in
Tennis-
Court.

* Thiers, i. 61, and Lacretelle, vii. 34.

† Mignet, i. 51.

separate until they had framed a constitution for the country.*

CHAP.
II.

9. The alarm of the nobles increased, and the indecision of the king augmented in proportion. But some decisive act was necessary, and they resolved on the most deplorable ever adopted. After an attempt, equally futile and contemptible, to prevent the assembly from again meeting, by hiring the tennis-court for the prince's amusement—as if determined men would be baulked by such a wretched expedient—Louis was constrained to congregate the states in the hall, and to address the commons in terms of reproach, which increased their indignation. “Gen-
tlemen,” he said, “at the time I took the resolution of assembling you, when I had surmounted all the difficulties which threatened a convocation of my states, when I had, to use the expression, even preconceived the desires of the nation, in manifesting beforehand my wishes for its welfare, I thought I had done everything which depended on myself for the good of my people. It seemed to me you had only to finish the work I had begun; and the kingdom impatiently expected the moment when, in conjunction with the beneficent views of its sovereign and the enlightened zeal of its representatives, it was about to enjoy that prosperous and happy state which such an union ought to afford. The states-general have now been opened more than two months, and have not yet even agreed on the preliminaries of their meeting. Instead of that harmony which should spring from a love of the country, a fatal division spreads alarm over every mind. I am willing to believe, and shall be happy to find, that the disposition of Frenchmen is unchanged; but your present opposi-
June 23.

1789.

Folly of the
Court.

* Lacroix, vii. 38. Thiers, i. 64.

CHAP.
II.

1789.

tion and late turbulence lead me to consider that you present pretensions to which you are not entitled ; I owe it to the welfare of my realm, I owe it to myself, to dissipate these fatal divisions, and it is with this disposition that I once more convene you, to recall to your memory the true spirit of your constitution, and to resist those attempts which have been raised against it."* But the weakness of his character was unfit to sustain the arrogant demeanour he assumed ; and faltering accents betrayed his incompetence, possibly also his repugnance, to the task. Concentrating, however, the little energy of which he was capable, he complimented the privileged orders in terms of unmerited praise, reprimanded the commons with words of undeserved severity, concluded his insulting speech by threatening to assume despotic power, unless they acquiesced in his desire for a separation of the orders ; and commanding them instantly to revoke their decree, he haughtily retired.†

Conduct
of the
Assembly.

10. The nobles who instigated this melancholy exhibition of austerity, unsustained by authority,‡ applauded and followed the king in his retirement ; the commons listened in uninterrupted silence, and, with the greater part of the clergy, remained. But Louis had no sooner left the chamber than Mirabeau arose, and, with indignation flashing in every feature of a face which looked as if he had been struck by a thunderbolt in his youth, and imbibed the lightning's blighting power,§ exclaimed, " I should admit that what you have heard might save the country, were not the presents of despotism always dangerous. After that array of arms, and violation of the nation's temple, will you be commanded to rejoice ? Where

Speech of
Mirabeau.

* State Papers, Annual Register for 1789, p. 329.

† Thiers, i. 65-67.

‡ Mignet, i. 64.

§ " Fancy," said he, describing himself, " the face of a tiger with the small-pox."—Lacretelle, vii. 17.

are the enemies of the country? Who is the Catiline at our gates? I demand that, enshrouded in your dignity and legislative power, you repose in the sanctity of the oath you have sworn, and separate not until you have established a constitution."*

CHAP.
II.

1789.

11. The vehement orator was here interrupted by the entrance of De Brezè, the court chamberlain, who, arrogantly addressing the president, said, "You have heard the orders of the king;" "I obey," replied the imperturbable Bailly, "only those of the assembly." The minion persisting, Mirabeau turned on him the withering glance of his eyes, and, in a voice which shook the air with superhuman power, cried, "Yes, we have heard the intentions suggested to the king; but you, sir, have neither place, nor right to speak here. Go, tell your master we are assembled by the power of the people, and will not be expelled except by the force of the bayonet."† The terror-struck official withdrew, and the abbot Sieyes, a speculative churchman, who, under the placid aspect of a priest, concealed the restless soul of a tribune, rising up, calmly said, "We are to-day the same as yesterday: let us deliberate."‡

Entrance of
De Brezè.

12. The assembly proceeded to confirm its previous decrees. "The first of these," said Barnave, an eloquent young deputy, who united the spirit of an ancient Roman with the grace of modern chivalry, "declares what you are; the second decrees the imposts which you alone have a right to levy; the third is your oath to do your duty; none of these measures require the royal sanction; the king cannot prevent that which it is not his duty to accord." A second intrusion from the court here interrupted the speaker; menials arrived to remove the benches, and some troops

Speech of
Barnave.

* Mignet, i. 65.

† Thiers, i. 69.

‡ Ibid.

CHAP. II. crossed, while others surrounded the chamber. Barnave resumed his seat, but the assembly calmly ratified its measures; and before separating, passed, on the motion of Mirabeau, a resolution declaring its members inviolable for their legislative acts.*

The Nobles subdued.

13. These determined proceedings created consternation in the court, and amongst the majority of the nobles who had there assembled to congratulate the king on the supposed success of his recent menace. But their joy was brief, and soon interrupted by the shouts of the populace applauding the assembly for its determination, and Necker for having, by his absence from the chamber, discountenanced Louis's arbitrary conduct.† Aware, and disapproving of the king's design, but finding his advice overruled, the minister had refused to attend him to the hall; and resigned his office, yet only to be restored by the power of the people, whose irresistible voice compelled the sovereign to supplicate the servant's resumption of place resigned. Louis, by acquiescing, regained a passing breath of popularity; but his power, as well as that of his supporters, was irrevocably gone; and the people had acquired all that the king and nobles lost. Next day the courtiers were doomed to witness the majority of the clergy join the commons. Others daily following, some of the nobles, including Lafayette and the Duke of Orleans, imitated the example, and the rest, with the few remaining clergy, finding resistance vain, were soon afterwards induced, by Louis's own solicitation, to unite with the assembly.

June 27.

Insubordination of the French Guards.

14. The court, thus vanquished in a contest with the representatives of the people, was next defeated

* Thiers, i. 71.

† Madame de Staël, *Considerations*, &c. c. 20, p. 307.

in a struggle with the represented. Since the recent elections, the sections of Paris, sixty in number, had remained in a state of organization; and while the higher branches from the city-hall fanned the zeal of their deputies, the inferior members in the Palais Royal inflamed the passions of the people. While in this state of excitement, an event occurred which increased the agitation. Several of the French Guards, the flower of the army, disgusted by hopeless servitude on the one hand, and seduced by the allurements of a capital on the other, were rigidly incarcerated for some trifling act of insubordination, if we believe their enemies;* or, should their friends be credited, for ceasing, while soldiers, to forget that they were citizens.† The populace flew to arms, assailed the prison, liberated the prisoners, and implored the assembly to protect them from punishment. The legislature was placed in a dilemma; it could not refuse, without losing the popular esteem, which formed its sole support; nor accede to the request without sanctioning insurrection against the government. An intermediate course was adopted; the king was requested to pardon the prisoners; and he ungraciously acquiesced. They were formally reincarcerated, to gratify some court caprice; but subsequently liberated in compliance with the popular desire. In forming his resolutions Louis displayed no foresight; in maintaining them, no firmness; in conceding, no grace. This trivial event was pregnant with destruction to his crown, which, deserted by its military supporters, fell to the ground. Their subsequent mutiny was fatal to the throne, as that of the legions commemorated by Tacitus, in

CHAP.
II.

1789.

* Lacretelle, vii., 60; and Gifford, *Life of Pitt*, i. 484; London, 1809.† Fox, *Parliament. Debates*; ib. p. 531; and Macintosh, *Vind. Gall.* p. 53.

CHAP. II. the declining days of Rome.* Such, in the instance of tyranny, is but justice retributive. These brave

1789. men had long been themselves enslaved, as well as the instruments of their fellow-subjects' slavery. But they at last awoke to a sense of their degradation; and, arising in vengeance, broke their own and others' chains on the heads of their oppressors.

Dismissal
of Necker;

15. The court in discharging the Guards yielded with reluctance, and only to facilitate or disguise a design it had matured, for the destruction of the assembly, either by a violent dissolution in Paris, or by exiling it to Soissons, where, deprived of support from the capital, it would be at the mercy of the government.† For this purpose, the discontented majority of nobles, by whom the scheme was devised,‡ attempted by leniency, to gain the support of the Guards. But they soon discovered that these would no longer attack nor overawe the populace; and fifteen foreign regiments, strangers to such scruples, were accordingly marched for the purpose from the distant frontiers.§ Necker being equally untractable, was, with his associates, abruptly dismissed; and replaced by the Marquis of

July 11th.

Broglie and some tools of the court. The late minister, while sitting down to dinner, received an order for instant, as well as secret departure from the kingdom, with such indifference, that he betrayed no emotion; and obeyed with such alacrity that, ere midnight, he was many leagues on his journey from Paris.|| More violent acts, however, were contemplated than the discharge of an obnoxious official. De Broglie demanded unrestricted liberty to murder ten members of the legislature;¶ but the feelings of

and De-
signs of the
Court.

* Tacitus, *Annal.* i. par. 16-30.

† Mignet, i. 66-68. ‡ Thiers, i. 84. § Ibid. p. 85.

|| Madame de Stäel, *Du Caractere de Necker*, ii. 271.

¶ Mignet and Thiers, *ut supra*.

the king demurred, and ultimately revolted from the homicidal design. CHAP.
II.

16. The assembly received intelligence of these measures with surprise, but betrayed no dismay. They immediately suspended their deliberations on the proposed constitution; and, by the motion of Mirabeau, voted an address to the king for the dismissal of the troops. Louis, in an evasive reply, professed love to his people, for whose protection, and the preservation of the assembly, he represented the soldiers had been summoned. He, at the same time, advised the legislature to retire to Soissons, if apprehensive; and, on the deputation's return to the chamber, one of the nobles proposed they should confide in the soundness of the king's advice, and the sincerity of his word. But the assembly justly rejected the one, and discredited the other. Mirabeau, in reply to a representation of Louis's honesty as a man, asserted that the word of a king, even though an honest man, afforded no guarantee for the conduct of his minister. He added, that blind confidence in their kings had ruined the state; insisted that the troops should retire from the assembly, not the assembly from the troops; and urged the necessity of maintaining resolution inflexible.* 1789.
Conduct of
the Assem-
bly.

17. The people heard of the minister's dismissal with more open indignation; for, though Necker had, by his vacillating conduct, forfeited much of their esteem, his successors were known to be more adverse to their cause. A large body quickly assembled in the Palais Royal, and excited by Desmoulins, an eloquent young patriot, who summoned them to arms, they tore branches from the trees, seized busts of Necker and the Duke of Orleans from a statuary's Massacre
of the po-
pulace by
the Prince
of Lam-
besc.

* Thiers, i. 88.

CHAP.
II.

1789.

Formation
of National
Guards,

and Tri-
coloured
Flag.

Acts of the
Assembly.

mart, and were parading the streets in triumph, when another multitude, which had quietly congregated in the gardens of the Tuilleries, was furiously assailed by the German legion of Prince Lambesc, who, with indiscriminate cruelty, put age and infancy to the sword. Roused by such wanton barbarity, and the death of a comrade slain in the massacre, the French Guards united with the populace; and a fierce encounter ensued between the two regiments, which the officers with difficulty allayed. But the contest begun, the people were not so easily appeased. All ranks of the citizens flew to arms; and while the lower seized whatever weapons could be found, the higher enrolled themselves into a body of militia, forty-eight thousand strong.* Such were the rudiments of those celebrated National Guards, who have since exerted an influence so important on the country, and may now be considered as its surest protection against aggression from abroad, or tyranny at home. They assumed, as a badge of distinction, the blue and red colours of the city and Duke of Orleans; and superadding the delicate regal white, they, by thus blending the softness of the lily with the tint of the violet and hue of the rose, formed that memorable Tricoloured Flag which, with brightness obscured by many an ensanguined deed, subsequently traversed the world (realizing Lafayette's prediction†), and tolled the knell of tyranny wherever it was unfurled.

18. Meanwhile the assembly and court at Versailles remained ignorant of the tumults in Paris. The legislature had hastily assembled to remonstrate against Necker's dismissal, and address the king for his recall; but this entreaty having, like all the others, been haughtily refused, the members were delibera-

* Thiers, i. 91.

† Ibid.

ting on the means of counteracting Louis's arbitrary acts, when intelligence of the disturbance in the capital arrived, and plunged all parties in consternation. The assembly, however, soon recovered its wonted energy, and passed a decree denouncing the discharge of the late ministers, and the accession of the new ; ordering the dismissal of the troops, and the organization of the National Guards ; confirming all their former decrees, and declaring their sitting permanent ; part of the members remaining day and night on the benches, while others retired for recreation or repose.*

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II.

1789.

19. During these proceedings at Versailles, the insurrection increased in Paris. The streets were wholly in possession of the populace ; the avenues of the city blocked up, persons flying intercepted, and all channels of communication closed. Flesselles, the provost of the city,† a weak and vacillating man, had exasperated the multitude by a promise of arms, alike imprudent and insincere ; and was now exposed to their fury, inflamed by disappointment. Seizing a large store of government ammunition on its passage by the Seine to Versailles, they returned with reiterated demands ; and another attempt to appease their rage, by a simulated order for the fabrication of fifty thousand pikes, increased their resentment. From menacing the magistrate, they quickly proceeded to attack the municipal mansion, and were only deterred from storming it by the intrepidity of an elector, Moreau de St. Maury, who threatened to ignite a magazine in the building, and destroy, at once, the assailed and the assailants.

Insurrec-
tion in
Paris.

20. The city-hall was saved by his firmness, and the fury of the multitude sought another object. A cry, "To the Bastile," was raised by a single voice,

Assault on
the Bastile.

* Mignet, i. 80.

† Or rather of the Traders, Lacretelle, vii. 71.

CHAP. and instantly re-echoed by ten thousand tongues.
 II. This fortress, formidable in nature, more formidable

1789. in name, had long been the seat of mysterious terror, and open cruelty. The dread of its gloomy dungeons was aggravated by impenetrable secrecy; those immured in its recesses saw no light, heard no voice, and rarely escaped to disclose the misery of their sufferings. The sound of its name alone at all times inspired fear; and in their present fury, it excited the people to phrenzy. Great numbers instantly flocked to the prison, while others secured the guns at the Hospital of Invalids, with which, and twenty-eight thousand stand of arms, they hurried to assail it. The fortress was defended by only one hundred men, and of these three-fourths were superannuated,* but it was deemed impregnable, and the garrison were incited by Delauney, the governor, to hold out to the last.

Its Siege; 21. The insurgents gradually increased during the night of Sunday, the 13th, and by noon of the 14th of July, their numbers and violence were equally great. A deputy from the city had, a short time before, obtained admission to the citadel, and received a pledge that the garrison should not fire except in defence; but he had scarcely retired ere the governor threatened to commence an attack unless the multitude withdrew. Such menaces are seldom effective on men when excited, and still seldomer succeed with a populace whose courage increases with danger. The threat, however, was realized; and failed. Some shots were fired from the fortress before it was attacked.† Two men instantly sprang on an outer buttress, and amidst a shower of musketry from the garrison, severed with hatchets the chains of a drawbridge. The people,

* Lacretelle, vii. 86.

† Gifford, Life of Pitt, i. 493.

on its fall, rushed to the second barrier through a still increasing discharge of arms. Secure behind their ramparts, the defenders poured in their fire on the dense multitude with fearful effect. Hundreds were killed, but their fate only augmented the fury of the survivors. Fast as one phalanx was mowed by grape-shot, another equally devoted and defenceless rushed to succeed it. Yet, personal courage seldom avails against the resources of art; and the assailants were on the point of being repulsed, when the French Guards arrived with the guns from the Invalids, and turned the day in their favour.

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II.

1789.

22. The siege was now commenced in regular form, and continued for some hours amidst a severe fire on each side; every moment, however, increased the number of the assailants, and diminished the power of the assailed. About six o'clock in the evening, the strength of the garrison was completely exhausted; but Delauney, the governor, a merciless and stern, yet brave old man, having been secretly enjoined to resist, and encouraged by a promise of relief, still evinced a spirit unsubdued. Relief and resistance were soon equally hopeless; yet faithful to his duty, he proposed to apply a match to the magazine, and surrender his trust with his life. But the garrison opposed a project so pitiless to himself and others, and alike useless and insane. Resolving to submit, they displayed a flag of truce from the ramparts; but the besiegers had previously effected an entrance, and become entitled to exercise the savage rights of storm. Delauney was instantly struck down. He died, crying, "Kill me, quick," and expiated a long career of cruelty by a still more cruel death. The greater part of the garrison shared his fate, notwithstanding the efforts of the French Guards

and Cap-
ture.
July 14th.

CHAP.
II.

1789.

to save them from the fury of the multitude. The fortress and its vast stores were soon in possession of the people ; its prisoners, unexpectedly few in number, liberated ; and scenes of suffering, long withheld from sight, at last exposed to view. While some of the insurgents demolished the dungeons, or surveyed, in silent horror, the sad records of despair, others, impelled by vengeance, or intoxicated with victory, marched in triumph to the town-hall, with the ponderous keys of the fortress and amputated hands of Delauney elevated on one spear, and his decapitated head on another. A new victim was there sacrificed to their resentment. Flesselles, the mayor, accused of adding to his recent treachery the guilt of a secret communication with the citadel, in vain attempted exculpation, and fell by a musket ball, when on the point of retiring.*

Conduct of
the Court.

23. In the meantime the court and government, unaware of this successful rebellion, were concerting measures to coerce the assembly at Versailles, and crush the insurgents of Paris. With this view the Swiss Guards and frontier regiments had received double charges of ammunition, and orders for readiness to march at a moment's notice. While the king and his ministry were maturing their preparations for a violent dissolution of the senate, and an attack on the city, the queen and princesses were employed in securing the affections of the troops, by bestowing caresses on the officers, and distributing money to the men. Another deputation from the assembly had been insultingly rejected, and the design was on the eve of consummation, when information of the Bastille's capture arrived, and the confidence of the

* Dusaulx, *Prise de la Bastille, passim* ; Paris, 1821 ; and *Histoire de la Rev. Fran. par Deux Amis de la Liberté*, i. 267-306 ; Paris, 1792.

government in its strength, gave way to dismay on its fall. The duke of Liancourt, one of the ministry, immediately sought an interview with the king, and disclosed the catastrophe. "This" said the infatuated Louis, "is a riot;" "No, Sire," replied the other, "it is a revolution;"* and advised him to submit. The terror-struck sovereign instantly abandoned his intentions, and hurried to the assembly.

CHAP.
II.

1789.

24. When intelligence of the Bastille's fall reached the assembly, a member proposed to send another remonstrance to the king. "No," said Clermont Tonnerre, a deputy not undevoted to royalty, "leave him the night for reflection; kings, like other men, must purchase experience."† Some of the members retired for repose, but the greater part remained on the benches, to prevent the anticipated closure of the hall, and maintained an attitude of silent serenity, undisturbed by the tumult of the distant capital, or the approaching danger from the adjoining court. On the morrow, the event which filled the government with alarm, only imparted to the legislature additional energy. Immediately on its meeting, an address, more impressive than ever, was voted to the king, and twenty-four of the leading members were appointed to convey it. Mirabeau, with his usual vehemence, instructed the deputation. "Fail not," said he "to tell the king that the foreign hordes by whom we are surrounded, were yesterday caressed by the princes, the princesses, and their favourites; and loaded with their presents. Tell him that during the night these foreign satellites have been gorged with gold and wine, while in impious songs they were predicting the slavery of France, and with brutal vows invoking destruction on the national

Acts of the
Assembly.

Speech of
Mirabeau.

* Mignet, i. 181.

† Ibid. p. 100.

CHAP. assembly. Tell him that even in his palace the
II. courtiers have danced to the sound of their barbarous
1789. music, and that such scenes preceded the massacre of
Bartholomew.”*

Reconcilia-
tion of the
King and
Assembly.

25. The deputies were on the point of departing, when Louis arrived without either guard or escort, and attended only by his brothers. The assembly, touched by the simplicity of his entrance, was about to applaud, when Mirabeau, raising his hand impressively, exclaimed, “Wait, till the king disclose his intentions. Let a mournful respect be the first reception accorded to the monarch in this moment of grief. The silence of the people is a lesson for kings.”† By the solemnity of these words, the vast assemblage of twelve hundred men was instantly hushed; and Louis made a short, unaffected speech. He deplored the disturbance in the capital, and the assembly’s distrust; expressed a desire to be reconciled with his legislature, and a hope that their reconciliation would terminate the distress of the country. The chamber, with generous cheers, responded to his advances, and in still louder strains the multitude, without, reverberated applause. The assembly shortly afterwards adjourned; and Louis, with the deputies, was conveyed by the people in triumph to the palace, from whose windows his queen and family surveyed, with emotion, the unexpected but affecting scene.

Joy in
Paris.

26. A deputation from the assembly was dispatched with the intelligence to Paris, where the reconciliation excited general enthusiasm. Order was quickly restored by the efforts of Bailly and Lafayette, the former of whom had been nominated mayor of the city, and the latter appointed commander of the National Guards. A *Te Deum* was proposed in

* Thiers, i. 105.

† Ibid.

honour of the event; and this ceremony, so often profaned to celebrate the triumphs of sovereigns,* was for the first time performed to commemorate a victory of the people. The king soon afterwards visited Paris, accompanied by a number of the legislature; and though at first received in silence by the people, a few conciliatory words from his lips produced loud marks of applause. "Henry IV." said Bailly, while presenting the keys of the capital, "to whom these were offered, conquered his people, but to-day the people have conquered their king."† Joy alone prevailed where terror so lately reigned. Louis recalled Necker, and dismissed the obnoxious ministry. The nobles joined the assembly, and along with the clergy, in a moment of intoxication, surrendered all their exclusive privileges. One night changed the aspect of the realm, and rendered all Frenchmen equal. The assembly was now truly national, and loud applause burst forth when the king, for the first time, addressed it by this designation.‡

CHAP.
II.

1789.

July 17th.

27. Thus was the first stage of the revolution accomplished; the king and privileged orders sacrificed the power they had hitherto exclusively retained, and agreed henceforth to share it with the representatives of the people. Harmony was restored, but destined to be of short duration. The populace had discovered that concessions demanded by justice, but denied by authority, might be extorted by fear; and had acquired a confidence in themselves, with a corresponding contempt for their rulers. The court, uninstructed by adversity, soon resumed its heedless career. A few of its leading members, including the king's brothers, set the fatal example of emigra-

First
Stage of
the Revolution
accomplished.

* See Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, *passim*.

† Thiers, i. 109.

‡ Mignet, i. 108.

- CHAP. II. tion, by flying from a country in whose bosom they had raised the flames of rebellion, without possessing either ability to allay, or courage to repress them ; and carrying their vices into another land, excited hostilities against their own.
- 1789.
-

Second
Stage of
the Revolution.

28. The people having now learned the extent of their power, and having reason, as well as strength, on their side, were not disposed to sink into their former slavery. A passion for liberty quickly spreads, and concessions fail to satisfy when the victory is won. Each day increased the subjects' influence, and diminished the sovereign's importance. They acquired vigour through his vacillation, and flourished by his decay. A taste of freedom inspired an appetite for more ; they spurned imperfect emancipation, when unrestricted liberty appeared within their grasp ; and impelled by the hatred, or exasperated by the experience of oppression, they forgot to extend mercy to their vanquished oppressors.

Riots in
Paris.

29. The dismissal of Necker excited a spirit of resentment, not to be allayed by the recall of the minister. In Paris tumultuous meetings of the citizens were daily held. A general commotion drew alike the philosopher from his study, and the trader from his store. All the artisans of the metropolis forsook their avocations to attend these assemblies ; and by this transit from the toils of private, to the turmoil of public life, the whole duties of society were interrupted. The prospect of a scanty harvest increased the scarcity produced by such social derangement ; and popular orations embittered the endurance of national suffering. The Commune,

or municipality of Paris, consisting of two commissioners from each of its sixty districts, was the only body whose control the people owned; and its utmost exertions failed to provide them with food, or prevent them from turbulence. In this state of excitement they sacrificed Foulon, an aged, grasping, and avaricious aristocrat, odious from his connexion with the late ministry, despicable for a long career of speculation,* and still more detested for ceaseless persecution of the poor, whom with cruel derision he had proposed to feed like brutes upon grass. Berthier, his son-in-law, shared a like fate, and was suspended from a lamp-post,† the usual instrument of popular vengeance. Bailly and Lafayette in vain interposed to prevent these lawless deeds. The philosophic habits of the one, unfitted him for civil strife, and the visionary principles of the other, a servile student of Washington's cold and passionless character, but without either the decision or the enterprise of his prototype—rendered him incapable of inspiring his troops with devotion, or of guiding the revolution he contributed to excite.

CHAP.
II.

1789.

Murders of
Foulon,and
Berthier.

30. While such was the agitated state of the capital, that of the provinces was not less alarming. A rumour that brigands were approaching to destroy the fields in immaturity, one of those unfounded reports common in periods of calamity, raised the whole rural population in arms. A mysterious event, which simultaneously occurred, augmented the commotion. A nobleman, named Mesmai de Quincey, had congregated the people to an entertainment in his castle, and in the midst of festivity, the explosion of a magazine dispersed all in the air. Whether the catastrophe arose from accident or design is unknown.

Disturbances
in the
Country.Mesmai
Explosion.

* Thiers, i, 115.

† Lacretelle, vii. 118.

CHAP. II. The host, who abruptly disappeared, and after six years' absence as suddenly returned, attempted to prove the one;* but the people more justly believed in the other, and arose with irresistible fury. In all parts of the kingdom the castles of the aristocracy were burned; and their owners expelled from domains, which, as in the day of prosperity they had not patriotism to inhabit, in the hour of adversity they possessed no power to defend.

Acts of the
Assembly.

1789.

31. The minister, Necker, in vain attempted to terminate these disturbances by proposing an amnesty for past offences. The commune approved, but on the ground of usurping its rights, the assembly rejected the motion, which was supposed to have originated in a desire to save the Baron de Besenval, an obnoxious adherent of the court,† though it more probably arose from the premier's passion for popularity. The legislature itself was equally disappointed in the hope of restoring tranquillity by proclaiming the Rights of Man. This celebrated decree—which abolished all prescriptive rights and peculiar privileges, whether of rank, race, towns, provinces, or individuals; and aimed at blending into one harmonious whole, a nation divided for ages by different principalities, customs, habits, judicatures, and jurisdictions, and now inflamed by mutual animosities—produced no immediate advantage. A *Te Deum* was appointed to celebrate the equality it introduced amongst all classes, and their eligibility alike to every civil and military office; Louis was complimented with a temporary title as the Restorer of French Liberty;‡ but the penury of the state continued pressing as ever, and the fierce spirit of the people remained unsubdued.

Decree of
the Rights
of Man,
Aug. 11.

* Histoire Parliametaire de la Rev. Franc. ii. 160-162; Paris, 1833.

+ Thiers, i. 118.

† Ibid. p. 136.

32. Amid a conflict of nature, the sun of liberty had arisen upon France, and in the midst of still more destructive human convulsions, the assembly now proceeded to frame a Constitution for the country. The produce was striking and original as the power which presided at its birth. The minister, Necker, desired a modification of the British government; two chambers of legislature possessing reciprocal control, and a sovereign with a negative on the acts of both. But this project was now too late. A similar proposal had previously been made by the bishop of Langres, and rashly rejected by the peers; nor would they nor the commons now acquiesce in its renewal; the one being afraid to separate, lest the popular branch should usurp the whole legislative power, and the other unwilling to trust the nobles in an isolated chamber, from an apprehended loss of their paramount influence when united. Without much dissension they accordingly resolved to have one chamber only; the members of which were to be elected by those of the communes, who in their turn should be chosen by primary assemblies of the people. The kingdom was divided into 83 departments, which comprehended 1720 communes, and these were subdivided into 6400 cantons, whose inhabitants formed the primary assemblies. An annual taxation to the amount of three francs constituted a voter in the canton, and a like contribution of ten francs qualified an elector for the commune. The communes collected the national revenue, and were also invested with the local control of their districts; the departments had the power of electing judges, magistrates, and ministers of religion.*

CHAP.
II.

1789.

The New
Constitu-
tion.

33. The question of the king's Veto produced far

The King's
Veto.

* Burke, Reflections, &c., 446, 447; and Macintosh, Vind. Gall. 230-238.

CHAP. more discussion. The royalists contended for an absolute negative; Mirabeau, with the majority, desired
 II; 1789. a suspensive voice; and a third party, small in the chamber, but powerfully supported by the populace without, insisted that the sovereign should possess no power of restriction. Fierce debates ensued within the chamber, and beyond its walls still fiercer tumults were raised by the people; the majority of whom knew not whether the veto was a new impost to be levied, or another act of tyranny to be resisted.* The king, on the advice of his minister, terminated the dispute by a formal application for a suspensive negative, which should enable him to annul an obnoxious measure when first decreed, but not to oppose it if passed by a second assembly. This prerogative was equal to an absolute veto in effect, and its frequent exertion led to his fall.

Threat-
 ened Na-
 tional
 Bank-
 ruptcy,

34. But these measures, though calculated to allay the excitement in the nation, failed to ameliorate the exhausted condition of the treasury. Necker's financial resources and popular reputation declined with equal rapidity. A loan for thirty millions of francs (£1,200,000), which he proposed to raise, was reluctantly sanctioned by the legislature, and unhesitatingly refused by the financiers. The public distress induced the assembly to tolerate a second proposal for eighty millions, but it was equally unsuccessful at the public Exchange, from which the agitation in the country caused capitalists to withhold their funds. The greatest penury meanwhile prevailed; the royal plate had been coined to provide for the current expenditure; but this produced only temporary relief,

* "Do you know what the Veto is?" said a countryman to his neighbour, and, on the latter replying "No," continued, "It is this—you have your plate filled with soup; the king commands you to throw it away, and you must do so."—Thiers, i. 148.

and the minister foresaw no remedy more permanent but in forestalling the revenue. His design thus to raise one-fourth of the country's income had been approved by a committee of the assembly; but when submitted to the congregated chamber, it was on the eve of being rejected for a national bankruptcy, when Mirabeau unexpectedly advanced to his support. The legislature still hesitated; but a powerful oration brought them under the advocate's dominion. "The other day," he said, in concluding his splendid address, "during some ridiculous motion at the Palais Royal, some one exclaimed 'Catiline is at the gates of Rome, and you deliberate;' though assuredly no Catiline, no danger, no Rome was there; but to-day a hideous bankruptcy stares you in the face, threatens to destroy you, your fortunes, your honour—and yet you deliberate!"* His eloquence prevailed; the motion passed.

CHAP.
II.

1789.

averted by
Mirabeau.

35. Private, equally with patriotic, motives prompted Mirabeau to adopt this course. He foresaw that its poverty and distress would soon render him master of the court; which, on the other hand, anticipated that his own profusion and dissipation would as rapidly subject him to its power. He accordingly supported Necker, in expectation of supplanting him. But reluctant to strengthen an adversary more than his purpose required, he simultaneously proposed that government should henceforth be responsible to the legislature; a motion which, if successful, would have enabled him at once to shield the king, and shake off an opponent. A still deeper aim was involved in the proposal. He foresaw that this responsibility of ministers would naturally lead to their presence in the chamber, which the present con-

Designs of
Mirabeau.

* Thiers, i. 161, 162.

CHAP. II. stitution universally forbade, and he eagerly desired, in the well-founded belief that commanding eloquence alone could sustain his attempts.* But republican jealousy thwarted, and death ultimately frustrated these ambitious designs.

1789.
Feast of
the Body
Guards.
Oct. 1st.

36. Meanwhile the assembly and inhabitants of Paris desired the king's removal to the capital, that he might be under popular control ; while the nobles were eager to withdraw the court to Metz, and retain him in their power. The distrust existing between the regular troops and National Guards, gave an additional impulse to the inclinations of each ; and a circumstance, trifling in its nature, decided the event, as trifles often generate gigantic issues. At an entertainment given by the body-guards to some foreign regiments at Versailles, the king's health was proposed with enthusiasm, and the toast of the "The Nation" was slighted or forgot. During the excitement that succeeded, the royal family entered, and the musicians raising the plaintive air,—

"Oh, Richard ! Oh, my King ! the world abandons thee,"

intoxication followed, and produced its concomitant imprudence. The troops drew their swords and vowed to defend their sovereign to the last :† a few National Guards, invited to the feast, were maltreated, and their colours trodden underfoot.‡ The white cockade of royalty for one night subdued the blue and red republican banner ; the queen applauded the triumph, or rejoiced in the festival ; the imprecations of a famishing and insulted people followed.

Insurrec-
tion in con-
sequence.

37. The famine which prevailed in Paris increased the indignation excited by this untimely festivity ; and the refusal of Louis to ratify the Rights of Man,

* Campan, ii. 36 ; De Stäel, ii. 316.

† Campan. ii. 64.

‡ Mignet, i. 137.

contributed to raise another insurrection. A new class of rioters now started up, more formidable than any that had hitherto appeared. Females whom starvation stirred to frenzy, forgot their gentle nature, to take part in public strife; and abandoned men simultaneously forsook their habitual dress* for a disguise which secured immunity from danger. On the 5th of October, a large body of these insurgents surrounded the city-hall, and loudly demanded bread, which the authorities were unable to provide. Enraged by disappointment, the rioters immediately resorted to violence; repulsed the National Guards on duty; forced their way into the building, and sounding the great alarm bell, threw the whole city in commotion. Being quickly reinforced by a body of brigands, their audacity increased with their number, and they were on the eve of burning the edifice, when Maillard, a popular demagogue, summoned them to Versailles, to prevent the conflagration.† The multitude immediately forsook the city, and after a vain attempt of their leaders to disperse them in the suburbs, they proceeded on their march, and arrived in the royal town at the moment when the king and his legislature were again embroiled.

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1789.

38. Louis, after reluctantly accepting some of the memorable decrees of August, had refused to ratify others without recording his disapprobation of their spirit; but the assembly insisted on unqualified confirmation, and was on the point of dispatching a remonstrance to the palace, when Maillard with his disorderly followers arrived, and demanded a conference, which the panic-struck senators had neither prudence nor power to deny. Surrounded by a body of lawless women, or men disguised in their apparel,

Outburst
at Ver-
sailles.

* Campan, ii. 66.

† Thiers, i. 171.

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II.

1789.

the bold demagogue addressed the chamber, detailed the people's sufferings, demanded redress, and was proceeding to denounce a member of the legislature, when the president interfered, and partly by threats, in part by address, persuaded him to retire from the hall. But his purpose was only diverted: he instantly, with a deputation of twelve of the women, repaired to the palace, where a young and lovely female narrated their misery, and implored relief in language so thrilling, that the heart of the king was temporarily touched. Louis, though constitutionally embarrassed in moments of less emergency, feelingly embraced and dismissed her with a promise to alleviate their sufferings; and her companions, moved by the unexpected kindness, withdrew, with passions as assuaged as they had been excited on entrance. But the deputation in vain attempted to communicate this altered disposition to their comrades without, who loudly exclaimed they had been betrayed, and were prevented only by the body-guard from tearing them to pieces. This intervention unhappily was attended with bloodshed; two of the guards were struck, and several of the women sabred; and a more serious calamity would have followed—perhaps his own throne might have stood—had not the king sent an order for his troops to retire. They obeyed, but not till after exchanging shots with the National Guards of Versailles, who evinced a disposition to support the insurgents.*

Arrival of
Lafayette.

39. During this tumult a deputation of the assembly attended the king, and obtained his consent to the obnoxious decrees. The distribution of some bread simultaneously appeased the fury of the multitude, and the storm seemed past, when Lafayette, at the

* Lacretelle, vii. 193-200; Thiers, i. 173-176.

head of the National Guards, arrived from Paris. They had revolted from his command, but having subsequently sworn fidelity to the king, he repaired to the palace, and at midnight persuaded the terror-struck monarch to retire to a couch—but not of repose.

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II.
1789.

40. Calmed by a similar assurance, the assembly adjourned at two o'clock in the morning, and the general himself withdrew to recruit exhausted nature, but had scarcely closed his eyes, when a second collision ensued between the populace and body-guards. One of the royal troops having discharged his carbine in revenge of some insult, the whole multitude, who had bivouacked round the palace, were immediately in commotion; and during the confusion some brigands forced their way into the interior through an undefended door. The devotion of two body-guards alone saved the queen from falling a victim to their fury, and she had scarcely reached the king's chamber ere the assailants rushed towards her own. Baulked in the expectation of finding the object of their hatred, they advanced to the apartment of the king; but the royal troops being concentrated here, succeeded in keeping them at bay until the arrival of Lafayette, who, awoke by the tumult, hastened to their relief, after leaving part of his men to quell the disturbance among the populace without. This opportune arrival saved the inmates from massacre, but the object of the insurgents was accomplished. The hapless monarch, after suffering the general to conduct him, his queen, children, and two soldiers of the guards, successively to the windows, for the purpose of effecting a reconciliation with the multitude, shortly afterwards set out for Paris, in compliance with the popular demands, to

Attack on
the Palace,
Oct. 6;

and Re-
moval of
the Court
to Paris.

CHAP. take up his abode in the long-deserted palace of
II. the Tuilleries. An inebriated assemblage of women,

1789. who had abjured their sex's tenderness, and men who had abandoned their habitual dignity, following the heads of the two devoted body-guards elevated on pikes, preceded the cavalcade; and the assembly deputed a hundred of its members as an escort, at once to protect and preserve him under their control.* "I come" said the king, on his arrival in the metropolis, "with alacrity and confidence, amidst my people of Paris;" and Bailly, the mayor, to whom the words were addressed, repeated, but only partially reported them to the multitude. "Add, 'with confidence,'" said the queen, supplying the omission. Antoinette, finding resistance vain, now shewed a disposition to court popular applause; and during the recent insurrection, which was directed chiefly against her, she braved the utmost peril to obtain it. In the height of the tumult, she advanced with her children to a window, on being summoned by the rioters: "No children!" instantly resounded from a hundred voices; and thinking her assassination alone designed, she withdrew, but immediately reappeared unattended,† and the plaudits of the inconstant multitude rewarded her intrepidity. The military guardians of the throne displayed less magnanimity; the body-guards, its last protection, consisting chiefly of nobles, having shewn a disinclination for the perils of military service, were shortly afterwards disbanded, and joined their associates in emigration, exiles from the court and aliens from the people.

Emigra-
tion, and
conduct of
Emigrants.

41. The tide of emigration now rapidly set in. Nearly ten thousand of the principal nobles, whose advice originally plunged him in error, already had

* Mignet, i. 145-148.

† Campan, ii. 72.

deserted their sovereign in the midst of his misfortunes; and the animosity which their pusillanimous flight engendered was increased by their subsequent misconduct. A considerable number who had fled to Turin with count D'Artois, the king's brother, (subsequently the tyrannical Charles X.), impelled by revenge rather than stimulated by patriotism, endeavoured to foment disturbances in the south of France, by representing the king as a prisoner to insurgents in the capital, and irresponsible for aught that was done in his name. The conduct of Louis, with whom they maintained a secret correspondence,* tended to confirm their assertions. Though requested by the commune of Paris to recall his body-guards, he refused to acquiesce, because, while surrounded by the national troops, he felt not only more secure for the present, but at liberty afterwards to protest that his acts were constrained.† The people were thus taught to believe the king insincere, and the courtiers, coinciding with the emigrants, by their representations, confirmed this opinion.‡

CHAP.
II.

1789.

42. The king's despatch of the duke of Orleans on an embassy to England was also viewed with suspicion; though, in reality, it arose from distrust of a turbulent and ambitious kinsman, who, under the name of lieutenant-general, was supposed to aim at supplanting him in his kingdom.§ But whatever may have been the original views of his partisans, the character of this prince unfitted him alike for the post and the enterprise. Weak, capricious, and inconstant, bold, and aspiring to lead the populace one day, docile and subservient to the court the next, he supported the revolution less from public principle

The Duke
of Orleans.

* Campan, ii. 91.

† Thiers, i. 217.

‡ Campan, ii. 92.

§ Mignet, i. 128.

CHAP. II. than from private resentment, and was dragged by its current instead of guiding its course. His vices and
1789. his importance have been equally overrated. Individually licentious, like all his order, he had neither the endowments of a demagogue nor the qualities for a conspirator; and though generally enervated by debauchery, he occasionally could display both the dignity of a prince, and the spirit of a man. His immense fortune fomented the revolution; but his torpid nature neutralized the vague ambition he entertained; and Mirabeau, the chief of his adherents, having soon discovered his incompetence, cast him off with the contemptuous exclamation that he was unworthy of a moment's consideration.*

Decline of
Mirabeau
and Sieyes.

43. The great orator himself, however, was simultaneously thwarted by the assembly, which passed a decree prohibiting any deputy from accepting office; and Sieyes, a rival leader of the chamber, was also mortified by another resolution, which confiscated church property to the service of the state. "You would be free," he exclaimed, "and you know not how to be just," when tithes were recalled from the clergy to the people from whom they sprang. The efforts of the one to annul, and of the other to avert these respective decrees, were equally futile; and the legislature pursued its future career uncontrolled by either the eloquence of Mirabeau, or the originality of Sieyes. The contemplated accession of the former to the ministry was, in consequence, prevented; and to the still greater disappointment of the latter, the religious establishment of the country was reformed.

Reform
of the
Church.

44. By this important measure, the clergy were henceforth made stipendiaries of the state; the re-

* "*Ce J—— F—— ne mérite pas la peine qu'on se donne pour lui.*"—Thiers, *Pieces Justificatives*, i. 351.

venues of the idle dignitaries were diminished, and the incomes of the industrious curates increased. The number of bishops was equalized with that of the departments, and the whole property of the church sold to the communes; but these being destitute of funds equivalent to the enormous accumulation, *assignats*, or bills of exchange, based on ecclesiastical security, were issued instead, and became a source of present relief, yet future embarrassment. The higher clergy in vain endeavoured to avert this desecration (for such it was designated)* by a proffered loan of four hundred millions of francs (£16,000,000), to provide for the exigencies of the year. The liberality was counteracted by the lateness of the offer: concessions are meritorious only when conferred in time. Mirabeau, in the most splendid of his orations, supported the plan; and one of his electric bursts of eloquence mainly decided the question. "From the tribune on which I stand," he exclaimed, "I behold that palace window whence a faction, uniting the interests of earth and heaven, caused the hand of a weak French king to discharge the fatal carbine which gave the signal for the massacre of St. Bartholomew."† The commons, who had long suffered from clerical rapacity, rejected a compromise which would have restored the obnoxious system of tithes, or have recognized a right of property in those who

* Mr. Alison, an orthodox historian, attributes all the horrors of the revolution to this abrogation of tithes, which he designates, "the most venerable institution of the church." "The assembly," he adds, "made a wretched provision for the support of religion. The income of the Archbishop of Paris was fixed at £2000 a year; that of superior bishops £1000; of inferior £750; that of the smallest, £500. Their incomes were reduced to one-fifth of their former amount."—(History of Europe, &c. i. 193, 212; Edinburgh, 1833.) These reduced emoluments will appear contemptible to a member of the English hierarchy, but they considerably exceed the wages of the primitive apostles.

† Mignet, i. 161.

CHAP. II. are only casual recipients. The plan of reform was adopted ; and the clergy, in consequence, joined the
 1789. discontented nobles, and were, in future, the inveterate foes of the Revolution.*

Conspiracy
and Con-
demnation
of Favras.

45. Disturbances meanwhile continued in the capital, promoted by the brigands, who pursued their lawless vengeance on the one hand, and by the nobles, who prosecuted their intrigues, on the other. Martial law became necessary for the repression of the first, and the legal tribunals were employed to punish the second. History cannot rescue from oblivion the deeds of the former, but its duty is to record the designs of the latter. The most remarkable of these was the Marquis of Favras, an adherent of the court, who, it was alleged, had concerted a plan to assault the assembly, assassinate Bailly and Lafayette, carry off the king, and create a counter revolution. The first half of this accusation is improbable, but the other was substantiated to the satisfaction of a court of justice ; and persons of a higher rank, including even Monsieur, the king's brother (afterwards the insensate Louis XVIII.), were supposed to be implicated. The prince, however, denied the impeachment, and the details remain involved in obscurity ; as, according to some authorities, the convicted nobleman died protesting his innocence,† while others represent that he only refused to divulge his accomplices.‡

Constitutional
Oath.
Feb. 4,
1790.

46. A short interval of calm succeeded, but renewed agitation signalized the nativity of the year 1790 ; when Louis, in order to dispel the distrust that prevailed, unexpectedly entered the assembly, and expressed his attachment to the new constitution, his resolution to maintain it, and to instil like senti-

* Mignet, i. 163.

† Biographie Moderne.

‡ Thiers, i. 229.

ments in the mind of his son. His address was received with applause, and the president having appropriately replied, the king returned to the Tuilleries amid the acclamations of the people; and the legislature, after passing a vote of thanks to him and the queen, also pledged itself to maintain the constitution. Each member swore fidelity "to the nation, the law, and the king; and to preserve the constitution, as decreed by the assembly, and sanctioned by the sovereign." Beyond the precincts of the chamber the oath was embraced with the characteristic enthusiasm of the nation; and during several days, in all parts of the country, and amid all ranks of men, no sound was heard in public, except the words, "*Je le jure*," —I swear it.*

CHAP.
II.
1790.

47. But these rejoicings were of short duration. The cold contempt with which the popular deputies were received at court,† even on the night when Paris was illuminated to celebrate this reconciliation, while the noble members of the assembly obtained marks of cordial distinction, evinced on the part of the king either recent insincerity, or equally culpable present vacillation. Lafayette, who united an attachment to monarchy with republican opinions, in vain entreated him to abandon a course which exposed his integrity to suspicion. The advice was disregarded by the king, and the queen surveyed the adviser with undisguised displeasure. The aversion which his passionless character inspired, prompted her to refuse his aid even when proffered in support of her throne;‡ but she shewed no repugnance to Mirabeau, whose connexion was now daily closing with the court, though he more signally contributed to its fall. A stealthy interview between the lofty

Conduct of
the Court.

Conduct,

* Thiers, i. 223.

† Mignet, i. 143.

‡ Campan, ii. 120.

CHAP.
II.

1790.

Corruption,

and Character of
Mirabeau.

tribune and high-minded queen had already occurred, and though she at first displayed the indignation of a foe, his mental powers soon constrained her to secure him as a friend. His brilliant acquirements dazzled the susceptible mind of Antoinette; and Mirabeau, in turn, equally captivated by her personal charms, exclaimed, on his departure, "The monarchy is saved!"* A secret monthly subsidy of twenty thousand francs (£800), confirmed the coalition,† and corroborates the proverbial power of corruption; though justice demands the admission that he was impelled by no basely venal motives. Patriotic ambition prompted him at once to promote the revolution and save the monarchy. His object was to convert royalty to liberty, not to abandon liberty to royalty; and, while accepting the wages of the court, he was determined to be, not its tool, but its master.‡

48. Mirabeau was one of those great men whom great events produce, and Machiavel enjoins kings either to flatter or destroy. Bold, active, sagacious, and eloquent, he had courage to conceive, perseverance to perfect, wisdom to guide, and persuasion to enforce, the loftiest designs. He was, in every respect, adapted to the era in which he lived, and the era was equally adapted for him. The one was reciprocally dependent on the other; for, though genius often triumphs over time and circumstances, opportunity is, in general, necessary for its due development. Without the revolution he would have failed in his destiny; and the revolution would have failed without him.§ Unfanned by the breath of political convulsion, that spirit which slumbered for forty years, and then burst forth with such splendour,

* Campan, ii. 119.

† Dumont, *Memoire de Mirabeau*, p. 230.

‡ De Stael, *Consid. Rev. Franc.* ii. 31, and Mignet, i. 174. § Mignet, i. 122.

might have expired in a foul atmosphere of dissipation, or been stifled by the noxious air of a dungeon : and without him the revolution might never have been produced, or it would have been strangled in its birth. Able alike to raise and guide the storm, he fostered its early struggles, and now undertook the harder task of restraining its excess. His accession might have saved the monarchy, if the court had implicitly surrendered to his influence, and a Higher Power had not interposed. But the former still retained old predilections, and divided its hopes between him and the Marquis of Bouillé, an old adherent at the head of the army, whose confidence he was about to lose, as he had long lost that of the people ; and the decrees of the Latter are incomprehensible to human understanding.

CHAP.
II.

1790.

49. His connexion with the court contributed to diminish Mirabeau's authority in the chamber, and his popularity with the people. It also inspired with distrust the Jacobin Club, a new power, which had lately sprung into existence, and was destined to exert a momentous influence on the nation. Originally an assemblage of deputies from the vicinity of Bretagne, who congregated for philosophic discussion in an old convent of Jacobins, this memorable body soon abandoned abstract questions for practical objects ; and not only brought all the affairs of the country within the range of its debates, but began to anticipate the functions of the legislature, and to interfere with its deliberations. As the new-born spirit of the age prevented even a power so dangerous from being checked in its infancy, a rival, called the *Feuillans*, or Club of 1789, was formed to counteract it. Lafayette, and the adherents of constitutional monarchy, gave it their support ; and Mirabeau, eager to enlist

Jacobin
Club.The
Feuillans.

CHAP. every agent on his side, as well as to restrain the
 II. assumptions of its adversary, divided his presence
 1790. between it and the Jacobins; but in vain: the calm
 speculative nature of the one was unable to contend
 with the turbulent, but pointed activity of the other;
 and in the impending struggle it was not difficult to
 foresee how such a contest would terminate.

Celebra-
 tion of the
 Constitu-
 tion,
 14th July.

50. Yet still the surface of the volcano reposed
 in comparative tranquillity, and all parties seemed to
 harmonize in celebrating the confirmation of the new
 constitution, in a manner congenial with the disposi-
 tion of the nation. The Champs de Mars, an extensive
 plain on the shore of the Seine, was selected for the
 scene of this national jubilee; and when it was
 found that twelve thousand workmen, who had been
 employed for many weeks, were unable to complete
 preparations before the appointed day, all ranks in the
 population of Paris flocked from the city to assist.
 The ceremony, which took place on the 14th of July,
 presented an imposing array. In the centre of a
 large amphitheatre the king and the majesty of the
 people, represented by the president of the assembly,
 sate enthroned side by side. Behind them were ele-
 vated the queen with her children and the court. The
 deputies and members were ranged at each extremity;
 while four hundred thousand spectators formed the
 wings of the vast space, in the midst of which sixty
 thousand troops went through their evolutions; and
 in the centre of all, three hundred priests surrounded
 a lofty altar of the country. The ceremony of the
 day was commenced by the celebration of mass by
 Talleyrand, bishop of Autun, a prelate whose sarcastic
 wit had already elevated him to importance in a court
 where a happy epigram rendered a churchman more
 illustrious than the noblest sermon preached, or a

general more eminent than the greatest victory gained;* and whose deep penetration and profound duplicity made him afterwards more conspicuous on a wider field. The king, the assembly, and the soldiers then swore fidelity to the new constitution. The queen joined in the engagement with apparent cordiality. "Here is my son," she exclaimed, raising the infant dauphin in her arms; "he unites in the same sentiments with me." The people applauded; they believed in the sincerity of their sovereign, and the sovereign confided in the attachment of her subjects.† They danced, says a contemporary author, on the spot where had flowed so many tears; where courage, genius, and innocence had so often breathed forth their groans, and the cries of despair had so often been stifled.‡ The waving of innumerable banners, the discharge of artillery, and the acclamations of the vast multitude, completed a scene on which, it was remarked, Heaven itself seemed to smile; as the sun shone forth, and the sky, from whose fountains the rain previously descended in torrents, became serene during the celebration of the ceremony.§ But the happy omen drawn from the beaming luminary proved delusive as any that ever emanated from his Delphian shrine. The vows now ratified were destined soon to be broken, and anarchy in its fiercest form rapidly replaced the concord that momentarily prevailed.

CHAP.
II.

1790.

51. This festivity only suspended hostilities between the conflicting parties. The truce was first interrupted by dissensions in the army, which Bouillé commanded on the frontiers. Discord had for some time prevailed between the officers and soldiers;

Revolt of
the Army.* Chateaubriand, *Etud. Hist. Preface.*† Ferrière, *Memoires, &c.*, i. 18. 22.

‡ Mignet, i. 182.

§ Thiers, i. 268.

CHAP. the former of whom detested a constitution which
II. deprived them of that monopoly of rank they had
1791. hitherto enjoyed, either by the favour of a court,
or as a prerogative of birth ; while the latter were
equally attached to a system which promised advancement chiefly to merit. Collision thus ensued between minions noble only by accident of birth, and men on whose brow nobility was impressed by the hand of nature. It soon became necessary silently to annul the royal decree, which imposed one hundred years of nobility as an indispensable qualification for an officer, and excluded from promotion brave and friendless desert : but the privates still existed in penury, while a sum, equal to that allowed for their support, was allotted to the officers, who were thus far removed from that honourable poverty which forms the best guarantee for their modesty in peace and service in war.* Discontent was also engendered in the soldiers, by frequent associations with the people, which the officers vainly strove to prevent by incessant change of quarters, and the introduction of the tedious formality, and irksome severity of German discipline. In proportion as the troops sympathized with the civilians, their regard for their superiors diminished, and their repugnance to these restrictions increased. Excited by such feelings, a regiment rose and made prisoners of its officers at Metz ; and this revolt had scarcely been subdued by the energy of Bouillé, when a more formidable insurrection broke out in Nanci, which was not quelled without a severe contest between the insurgents and those troops who had returned to their duty. Insubordination was temporarily subdued, but the whole army soon afterwards joined the revolution ; and bequeathed to tyranny the im-

* Gibbon, *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, i. 221.

pressive memorial that though a military force may sustain a monarch in the midst of prosperity, in the hour of adversity he finds no support, except in the attachment of the people.

CHAP.
II.

1791.

52. The aspect of the assembly was scarcely more tranquil. A warm debate ensued on a proposition to abolish hereditary titles, which was strenuously opposed by the few remaining nobles, who, with characteristic weakness, contended for this shadow of power, when the substance had disappeared. But their opposition was vain; the king, by the advice of Lafayette,* hastened with his assent to the measure, in expectation of propitiating the populace by concurring in an act which he could not prevent.† This discussion was followed by a still fiercer wrangle on the possessions of the church—that fruitful source of discord in every age—which terminated in the confirmation of the assembly's previous resolutions, and in the overthrow of the feeble minister. Necker, who never enjoyed the confidence of the king, no longer possessed any influence in the legislature. Equally deserted by the people, in whose esteem a year before he stood so pre-eminent, he was endangered by their hostility on withdrawing from the kingdom; and a decree of the legislature with difficulty secured his retreat to Capet, in Switzerland, in whose obscurity he safely surveyed the future march of that revolution which he contributed to raise, but failed to control; and passed the remainder of his life without being either pitied by his friends, or feared by his foes. The maledictions of a nation pursued him in his flight; but history, whose voice is impartial,

Abolition
of Nobility.

Final Re-
tirement,

and Cha-
racter of
Necker.

* Thiers, i. 264.

† This measure, more than any other, increased emigration, and irritated the nobles as much as the act of confiscation provoked the clergy.—Mignet, i. 179.

CHAP. must qualify their justice. It must at once own his
 II. honesty, and acknowledge his incompetence ; assent
 1791. to the integrity of his motives, and censure the imprudence of his acts. The great error of his life was the duplication of the commons, and neglect to prevent the institution of a single legislative chamber ; yet, as already mentioned, it is difficult to discover how the one could have been avoided, or the other averted. The increased importance of the people demanded increased representation, and this could confer no power, except in a congregated legislature, where their numbers should equipoise those of the privileged orders. Beyond this, and his want of decision, Necker's conduct is unimpeachable, and can raise no reprobation, though it will excite no applause. His natural sphere was to direct unimportant affairs of commerce, not to guide great convulsions of men. " He is" said an illustrious Scotch philosopher,* " but a man of detail ;" yet had he possessed the comprehensive grasp of Sully, he could not have saved the monarchy.

Designs,
 and

53. The ministry which succeeded Necker's, was equally destitute of commanding talent ; and the king now placed his sole reliance on Mirabeau. For some time past he had contemplated removing himself from the scene of his cares and danger by flight ; which the assembly was equally desirous to prevent, from apprehension of consequent anarchy and civil war. Louis had already secured the aid of Bouillè to assist in a project formed by Mirabeau for his removal to Compiègne, and thence to the frontiers, where, supported by the army, he might dissolve the present assembly, and convoke another for the formation of a constitution less democratic.

* Adam Smith, quoted in Macintosh, Vind. Gall. p. 30.

To counteract his design, the assembly, in its turn, proposed a menacing decree against the removal of public functionaries from the sphere of their duties, implying that flight would be followed by forfeiture. Against this proposal, which aimed solely at the king, the power of Mirabeau alone could prevail, and Louis secured it by unlimited surrender to his will. The powerful advocate entered on the task with his accustomed energy, and during several days the chamber resounded with superhuman eloquence. In the midst of his exertions, however, the athletic orator was arrested by the mandate of death. His altered looks and sunken eyes had recently indicated that a Herculean constitution was exhausted alike by gigantic labour in the senate, and unbridled dissipation in the city; but dissolution occurred with a celerity which induced suspicion of poison and Jacobin guilt.* His death was striking and chequered as his life. "Weep not for me, my friends," he exclaimed, a few minutes before his decease, "but for the monarchy, which descends with me to the grave." The curate of his parish approached with ghostly aid, but Mirabeau preferred the ministration of Talleyrand, and found in philosophy that consolation which others discover in religion. "Open the windows," he exclaimed, "it only remains for me to close my eyes amid perfumes, flowers, and music, and quietly sink into eternal sleep." "Support this head, the strongest in France," he shortly afterwards, with pardonable vanity, cried to an attendant; and demanded opium to relieve his sufferings. His friends gave him some harmless beverage instead,† and immediately after draining the cup he expired; the safety of the court, and the sense of the country expiring with him.

CHAP.
II.

1791.

Death of
Mirabeau.
April, 20.

* Campan, ii. 128.

† Thiers, i. 282.

CHAP. 54. Mirabeau died in the forty-second year of his
 II. age, amid the plenitude of fame and power, universally

1791. regretted by his countrymen as the only spirit that
 Epitome of could rule the storm he had raised. Yet posterity
 his life. must mingle pity for his frailties with admiration of
 his genius. His death was premature for France
 and its sovereign, but opportune for his own repu-
 tation. It occurred at a moment auspicious to his
 immortal fame. Forty years of his life had been
 lavished in license, and only two illumined by the
 prodigal blaze of his mind; though during this
 brief period he had both redeemed the past, and
 attained that zenith of popularity which rarely
 presents any prospect but decline. The memory
 of his imperfections will diminish in the lapse of
 years; while his dazzling eloquence and dauntless
 patriotism, though neither originally inspired, nor
 latterly influenced by purity of principle, will beam
 with increasing brightness in the eyes of future ages.
 All classes of his countrymen, impelled by various
 motives, the royalists from attachment to royalty,
 the revolutionists by zeal for revolution—both alike
 claiming him as the apostle of their creed,—con-
 curred in lamenting and yielding him honour now.
 A noble church, converted into a nobler pantheon,
 with the inscription “To great men, a grateful
 country,” was allotted to receive his remains; though
 the people who thus signalised his obsequies soon
 afterwards reviled, and cast his ashes from their
 shroud. And yet his fate need not be lamented:
 it was his fortune to watch over freedom’s infancy,
 and he was happily reserved from witnessing its
 tomb.

Conse- 55. The fate of a king and kingdom hung upon his
 quences of his Death. life, with whose ebb Louis’s feeble hopes, and feebler

resolution simultaneously ceased. Flight seemed to the unhappy sovereign his sole resource, the frontiers his only refuge; and he became intent on quitting a scene where he could not remain with satisfaction, but whence he could not retire with safety. Two courses were suggested by his few remaining adherents; one, the more perilous, was to withdraw from the kingdom, join the emigrants, and, at their head, attempt to recover his authority by force of arms; the other, and less hazardous, consisted in merely retiring to some frontier fortification, where he might be safe from the hostility of his own subjects, and supported by the arms of foreign states. The latter was the more congenial to his timid disposition; and preparations were accordingly made for removing him to Montmedy, whence he could, if necessary, fall back upon Luxemburg, and thence retreat from the kingdom in the last extremity. All was ready for his departure on the 20th of June; Bouillé had prepared relays of horses, and detachments of guards, as far as Chalons, whither it was arranged the queen should conduct the expedition, and the general complete it to Montmedy. Louis, in the interval, was intrusted with the task of dissembling their intentions. With this view he addressed a letter to the foreign ambassadors, expressive of his attachment to the new constitution, but in terms so exaggerated that he might afterwards plead extortion:* yet with characteristic vacillation, he simultaneously complained to the assembly that his movements were interrupted, and assumed an appearance of constraint. Such conduct naturally failed to lull the suspicion, and aroused the vigilance of his subjects. An alarm of discovery caused the timid monarch to postpone his

CHAP.
II.

1791.

Louis's
contem-
plated
Flight.

* Thiers, i. 309.

CHAP. departure for a day, and this delay proved fatal to
II. the enterprise.

1791. 56. Under an assumed name and fictitious pass-
Flight to port, the king, queen, and family, with an attendant,
Varrennes. separately left the palace on the evening of the 21st
of June; and after considerable delay, as well as
danger from Lafayette, who, with the National Guards,
was on watch in the neighbourhood, re-assembled
in the vicinity, whence they proceeded by a public
conveyance to the city barrier, and entered a vehicle
prepared for their reception. Accompanied by three
body-guards, disguised as domestics, they pursued
their journey undiscovered till next afternoon, when
the king's imprudence in looking from the window
led to their detection, at Chalons; but the mayor of
the town being a royalist, they proceeded without
interruption to Pont-de-Someville, where a detach-
ment of Bouillè's troops was expected to receive
them. These, however, after waiting several hours,
had been compelled by a popular commotion to retire;
and the fugitives continued their flight unattended to
St. Menehould, where the king was again recognized
by the same want of precaution. The authorities of
the place being also devoted to the royal cause,
Drouet, an ardent revolutionist, who in this instance
discovered him, set off to the republican town of
Varrennes, to alarm the municipality, and adopt
measures for his arrest. A warm partisan of monarchy
pursued him in vain; he reached the drawbridge of
Varrennes before the royal party's approach; and
undeterred by the superiority of numbers, with a
single companion he intercepted their passage, pre-
sented a musket at the king, and demanding his
passport, compelled him to repair to the mayor, who,
on pretext of examining it, detained him until the

National Guards of the town assembled, and finally put an end to the flight. The terror-struck monarch was then informed of his detection, and in vain attempted to deny his identity. His queen, with more spirit, finding denial and intreaty equally futile, terminated the degrading dispute by impatiently exclaiming, "Since you recognize him as your sovereign, treat him with the respect you owe."* Encouraged by her example, Louis for a moment recovered his dignity; and addressing the multitude, assured them that he sought shelter in the provinces only from the tyranny of Paris. Antoinette joined with him in intreaties for permission to proceed; and the arrival of an expected escort for an instant re-inspired the suppliants with hope; but the soldiers having refused to join their officers in a rescue, the fugitives, after passing the night in the town-hall, were constrained to re-enter their chariot and return to the capital. Bouillè, who had in the meantime assembled a regiment of horse, arrived too late to succour, too weak to save them. The royal prisoners had been dispatched two hours before; and as the town was fortified, a river which intervened between it and Paris deep, and an intercommunicating bridge broken down, he was forced to leave them to their fate; and finding future efforts vain, he, after addressing a menace to the assembly, equally useless and ill-timed, withdrew from the country, and joining the cause of the emigrants, is in history heard of no more.†

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57. In Paris the flight of the royal family remained till next morning undiscovered, although

Their Re-
turn to
Paris.

* Campan, ii. 133.

† Bouillè, *Memoires*, &c. ii. 285-295.—After passing some years in the service of Sweden, he published an interesting account of the Revolution, and died in London in 1803.

CHAP.
11.

1791.

Lafayette had, on the previous eve, passed the queen in the palace-yard, but either overlooked or connived at her escape. On the following day, however, the intelligence spread rapidly, and the assembly, in an evil hour for the king, the country, and itself, dispatched an aid-de-camp, with orders to arrest the fugitives; thus, losing the opportunity of abrogating monarchy without injury to the monarch, and of establishing a republic without the odium of regicide. But this was unforeseen till ruin had engulfed alike the pursued and pursuers. Their emissary reached Varrennes while the municipality were deliberating on the fate of the prisoners, and decided its resolution to return them to Paris; whither they proceeded in the custody of the officer, until three deputies of the assembly received them at Chalons, and conducted them to the capital. Barnave and Petion, two of these commissioners, afterwards acquired a memorable name. The former, an eloquent and enthusiastic advocate of liberty, enraptured by the attractions of Antoinette, became her chivalrous adherent, and lost his life by this devotion; the latter, a stern republican, insusceptible to such charms, now displayed ungenerous severity to rank in affliction, but subsequently evinced equal elevation of mind in dying for his cause. Captives in the hands of their subjects, the royal family in eight days concluded their mournful journey, and slowly and sadly re-entered the metropolis, amidst a silence which rendered the impressive scene still more impressive.

Consequences of.

58. The result of this disastrous enterprise deprived Louis of all affection from the people, and all authority in the government. Immediately on discovery of his flight, the assembly, by one decree, commanded the ministers to obey it alone; and by another,

the king was now suspended from his functions ; three deputies were appointed to watch him, and a guard so vigilant imposed on his person, that he was, for some weeks, a prisoner in his palace. A body, powerful in the chamber, and still more powerful in the city, proposed at once to abolish royalty, and establish a republic ; but the majority of the legislature resolved on the restoration of limited monarchy. Louis was accordingly reinstated in his dignity ; the constitution, slightly modified, was accepted anew ; and the walls of the chamber again rang with acclamations of real or well-dissembled joy for a reconciliation which scarcely could be either solid or sincere. But the republicans did not acquiesce without a struggle. The Jacobin club, where Maximilien Robespierre, a provincial lawyer of mediocre abilities but inflexible pertinacity and unbounded ambition, had already acquired an ascendancy, clamoured for a commonwealth ; and an animated address from the English tribune, Thomas Paine, increased the excitement.* A tumultuous body of the people assembled in the Champs de Mars to enforce the demand ; and after a sharp conflict with the National Guards, commanded by Lafayette, were not dispersed without considerable sacrifice of life, and a total loss of his popularity.

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59. The assembly having now completed its design, prepared for dissolution : and after passing, on the motion of Robespierre, a decree to render members of the present legislature ineligible for the next, (which, by introducing a body of inexperienced and incompetent successors, gave rise to all the subsequent calamities,) the president pronounced its dissolution at an end.

Dissolution
of the
Assembly.

Sept. 30.

* Thiers, i. 335.

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II.

1791.

Its Cha-
racter and
Conduct.

60. So ceased this celebrated body, which was ushered into existence amidst such lofty hopes, and expired under omens so portentous. The popular sympathy which hailed its birth was in great measure withdrawn before its dissolution; and Paris, where the voice of the nation was now concentrated, had latterly considered as hostile to liberty that same chamber whose earlier course even ardent friends of freedom were disposed to condemn as revolutionary. This change is to be attributed more to the sanguine and advancing spirit of the times than to any dereliction of the assembly from its original principles; although these were perhaps mellowed by age, or matured by time. If less of energy and ardour for liberty were latterly displayed, it was because monarchy had been deprived of its dangerous prerogatives, nobility stripped of its galling privileges, and a hierarchy shorn of its odious assumptions. The king was no longer an absolute prince, at whose disposal the lives and fortunes of his subjects lay; but a sovereign controlled by the will of a legislature chosen by the people. The nobility no more possessed a prescriptive right to immunity from supporting the burdens of the state, and a monopoly for enjoyment of its benefits; nor were the clergy henceforth to luxuriate in idle pomp on those immense possessions, originally designed for the support of the poor and industrious flocks, but for ages devoted to the pleasure of the rich and indolent shepherds. Yet the king still retained many prerogatives of power, a yearly revenue of £1,200,000 sterling, the command of the army, a right to suspend the legislative decrees,* and all the dignity of chief magistrate of a mighty nation; though his authority was unduly limited and

* Thiers, ii. 10.

subordinate to popular control.* The nobility, though deprived of hereditary titles, cherished by the recollection of ages of glory, were still left in possession of their immense estates, and the influence which property naturally confers. Promotion in the camp, and dignity in the senate, were yet open to their ambition, if they possessed ardour for the one, or ability for the other ; nor were these spheres the less honourable because shared by merit of humble birth, and controlled by the will of the people instead of the voice of the court. The clergy still enjoyed their ecclesiastical rank, and ample revenues distributed by the state with impartiality, alike to the humble curate and the exalted dignitary. It may be surmised that so many ameliorations, effected in so short a time, should have secured a nation's gratitude to the body from which they sprang. But the assembly unfortunately terminated its toil after depositing the seed, without waiting for the harvest's maturity. Its members displayed infinite wisdom by effecting in two years, with comparatively little violence, the greatest revolution the world ever saw ; but they evinced equal imprudence by confiding to others the duty of conducting it, with no precaution beyond recommending that the constitution should not, until a lapse of thirty years, be reviewed.† They committed the fatal error of believing that a once absolute king will cordially submit to diminution of his power, a grasping aristocracy of its privileges, and an avaricious clergy of its spoils ; and they forgot that a long enslaved people, after once tasting freedom, will naturally pant for more. The premature separation of the chamber, and the injudicious decree against the re-election of its members, left all these heterogeneous

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* Mignet, i. 226.

† Ibid. p. 221.

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1791. parties uncontrolled ; or subject only to the dominion of rash inexperience and daring innovation. But for this fatal decision, the first free assembly of France might have earned an epitaph more glorious than the specious subverter of Roman liberty ; and instead of boasting that it “ found a capital of brick, and left it of marble,” might have made the nobler vaunt of finding it on the eve of convulsion, and leaving it tranquil ; of finding the institutions of the country destroyed, and leaving them restored ; of finding royalty unpopular, and leaving it respected ; and liberty annihilated, but left secure. Europe might then have been saved from witnessing, and history from recording, the devastation that followed.

CHAPTER III.

THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

1. Foreign Relations of France.—2. Great Britain.—3. Continental Powers; Anglo-Prussian League.—4. Secret Views of European Powers.—5. Their Open Professions.—6. The Emigrants.—7. The New Assembly.—8. First Meeting of; Quarrels with the Court; Decree against the Emigrants.—9. Decree against the Recusant Clergy.—10. Resignation and Character of the Molleville Ministry.—11. Embarrassment of the King.—12. The new Ministry; Character of Dumouriez.—13. Character of Roland and his Wife.—14. War with Austria.—15. Inauspicious opening of the Campaign.—16. Consequences of.—17. Murders at Avignon; and Massacre at St. Domingo.—18. Conduct of the Assembly; Dismissal of the King's Guard.—19. Decree against Refractory Priests; Servan's projected Encampment; Roland's Letter.—20. Conduct of the King; and Resignation of the Ministry.—21. Condition of the Court.—22. The Press and Clubs of Paris.—23. Insurrection on 20th of June, 1792.—24. Condition of the Queen.—25. Conduct of the King and Commune.—26. Partial reaction in the Country.—27. Foreign Hostilities; Treaties of Mantua and Pilnitz.—28. Affairs in France; Proposition to depose the King.—29. And to declare the Country in Danger.—30. The Country declared in Danger.—31. Distressing situation of the King.—32. Lafayette's Plan for Louis's Escape.—33. Constitutional Festival.—34. Preparations for another Insurrection; Character of Robespierre.—35. Marat.—36. Danton.—37. Liancourt's Plan to rescue the King.—38. The Duke of Brunswick's Proclamation; the Marseillaise.—39. Their encounter with the Royalists.—40. Eve of the 10th August.—41. Conduct of the Court.—42. Insurrection on the 10th of August, 1792.—43. Conduct of the Assembly.—44. Deposition of the King.—45. Acts of next Day; Jacobin Police.—46. Revolutionary Tribunal instituted.—47. Retirement of Lafayette.—48. Advance of the Allies.—49. Events in Paris; Arrest of the Royalists.—50. The September Massacres.—51. Murder of the Princess of Lamballe.—52. Conduct of the Assembly and Commune.—53. Provincial Massacres.—54. Hostilities; Cannonade at Valmy, and Retreat of the Allies.—55. Result of the Campaign.—56. Dissolution of the Assembly, and State of France.

1. The powers of Europe had long surveyed the French Revolution with absorbing interest. The despotism of the despotic states naturally viewed it with alarm from its outbreak; and even those where freedom was in some degree cherished, began to contemplate its progress with apprehension. The hatred and fear which the

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Foreign
Relations
of France.

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Great
Britain.

former bore it, were as yet concentrated in themselves ; their enslaved subjects, prohibited from political discussion, were precluded from evincing either sympathy or aversion. The less enthralled citizens of the latter, who had hailed with delight the dawn of liberty, now beheld the approach of its portentous meridian with feelings of mingled admiration and disquietude.

2. The people of England, so long accustomed to regard the adjacent country with feelings of animosity, had shewn their generous sympathy with fellow-freemen in France, by the presentation of addresses and formation of corresponding clubs, whose bold attitude all the secret influence and open persecution of the government in vain attempted to suppress. But the British nobility, by whom the control of the state had during ages been monopolized, for the most part reprobated the advance of democracy and the pretensions of talent unaccompanied by birth. Their sovereign, George III., a bigot by nurture, and a fanatic by nature, though possessed of a mind which no intellect enlightened, nor education adorned, was yet able to discern in the new principles, destruction to those high monarchical prerogatives which he was taught to consider a king's hereditary right ; and he opposed them with all the obstinacy of his character. Subservient to his impulse, the English cabinet was accordingly hostile to the revolution ; but open enmity it had not yet displayed ; though Pitt, who controlled its councils, had secretly assured a royalist envoy that he would not allow the French monarchy to perish.*

Conti-
nental
Powers.

3. The other European states were divided into two great parties, by an alliance between England

* Campan, ii. 179.

and Prussia on the one side, and the union of Austria with Russia on the other. Frederick the Great had closed his glorious career, and been succeeded by Frederick William, a prince as feeble and irresolute as the other was energetic and bold. Finding himself unable to maintain the importance conferred on Prussia by the martial vigour of his predecessor, he had abandoned his policy, renounced intimate relations with France, and formed a close connexion with Britain, under the name of the Anglo-Prussian league. The professed intention of this treaty was to support the stadtholder's authority in Holland; but its secret aim was to counteract an alliance between Russia, Austria, France, and Spain; and to humble the northern powers by abetting Sweden, then governed by the heroic Gustavus; stirring Poland, already groaning beneath the misery inseparable from its soil; and exciting Turkey, exasperated by recent defeat from Russian arms. But it terminated in failure, chiefly through the perfidy of the Prussian king. Of the three powers thus impelled to war, Sweden alone emerged with honour from the struggle; Turkey was vanquished by Russia; Poland completely overthrown; and so basely did the Prussian monarch depart from the spirit of the treaty, that, on the establishment of peace, he assisted to plunder the unhappy land he had engaged to save. France, though but passively concerned in this league, was eventually involved in its consequences; as, according to their existing treaty, she could not counteract the ambitious designs of Russia without a sacrifice of faith and an advantageous commerce with the Baltic; nor allow the expiring power of Turkey to be crushed without destroying the balance of Europe, and losing a lucra-

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Prussia.

Anglo-
Prussian
League.

CHAP. tive trade with the Levant. All the other European
 III. states were also more or less affected ; Holland,
 1791. which had rebelled against the stadtholder, was over-
 run by a Prussian army, and again reduced to his au-
 thority. Even Spain, remote as her position was,
 did not escape the power of a combination which at
 first influenced the continent, though in result it was
 abortive as in design it had been important.*

Secret
 Views of
 European
 Powers.

4. This treaty was quickly set aside : the dictates
 of mutual jealousy yielding to a sense of general
 danger. Princes abandoned struggles with each
 other, to enter into a contest with the people, and to
 oppose a revolution which proclaimed peace to the
 cottage and hostility to the palace. Private feelings
 also mingled with public principles. A branch of
 the Bourbons sat on the throne of Spain ; another on
 that of Naples ; while Austria had a daughter whose
 safety was menaced with the monarchy of France ;
 and states not swayed by the ties of blood were im-
 pelled by the more powerful instigation of interest.
 Prussia panted to pursue that martial career which
 at once sustained her military population, and had
 raised her from an inconsiderable electorate to an im-
 portant kingdom. Russia cherished like expectations
 from war, and a still deeper hatred of freedom : in the
 earliest stage of the revolution, the haughty Mes-
 salina who filled the imperial throne, had counselled
 the queen of France to " march without being dis-
 turbed by the cries of the people, as the moon pursues
 its career unstopped by the barkings of dogs."† All
 the other states of Europe were prompted by similar
 motives of aversion or ambition, were eager, and be-
 lieved themselves able, to crush the revolution ; though
 they had more to fear than to hope from the conflict.

* State Papers, Annual Register, 1789 ; and Thiers, i. 244.

† Campan, ii. 102.

5. But though the majority of European states viewed the French revolution with secret enmity, none had yet ventured on acts of open hostility. How much soever disposed to abet Louis in his flight, considerations for his safety restrained interference after his re-capture; even if, by his subsequent acceptance of the constitution, and address to their ambassadors, interposition had not been prevented. To this document, in which he expressed attachment to the recent changes, England and Prussia gave amicable answers; Austria and Spain professed pacific intentions, though entertaining doubts of his freedom. Holland, Switzerland, and the Italian states made satisfactory acknowledgments; Russia pronounced no opinion. The electors of Treves and Mayence, in whose principalities the emigrants found shelter, replied in evasive terms. The high-minded Swedish monarch alone declared his thoughts with sincerity; and proclaiming Louis a slave in the hands of rebels, received the communication with equal distrust and disdain. His opinion, however, though he was prepared to support it by arms, was comparatively unimportant; and peace might have been preserved but for the efforts of the emigrants.

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And open
Professions

6. This body consisted of three classes; naval and military officers, who had deserted their colours; civilians, who had abandoned their duties; and the timid, who fled from the aspect of danger. The officers of the navy, shortly after the outbreak of the revolution, emigrated almost to a man; but it was chiefly from those of the army, nineteen hundred of whom were already in voluntary exile,* that hostilities proceeded. Foes alike to the constitution and to every innovation

The Emi-
grants.

* Thiers, ii. 59.

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which interfered with their interest, they had assembled at Coblenz, Strasbourg, and the adjoining states, under the banner of the prince of Condé, the brave but headstrong and inane brother of the king, and the immediate orders of the Viscount Mirabeau, a brother of the late orator, whom he equalled in all but ability and fame. To restore the ancient despotism unmitigated was their declared design; and though their aim and efforts were equally abortive, they involved the king in suspicion, and filled the kingdom with alarm. Louis himself encouraged their exertions: for while he publicly enjoined them to cease hostilities, and return, he privately approved their conduct, and induced them to remain.* This dissimulation, however, which subsequently proved so fatal to him, was yet undiscovered; but the existing sympathy he could not conceal deprived him of the new assembly's confidence.

The New
Assembly.

7. The new, or Legislative assembly was more revolutionary in character than the old, which, from the chief of its duties, received the name of Constituent. The partisans of revolution in the last chamber now occupied the right, or ministerial side of the hall, under the name of Constitutionalists; and were desirous of retaining a limited monarchy: while their opponents consisted of men eager for greater innovations, and to substitute a republic for regal institutions. These last consisted of two parties: the first, and most enlightened, was formed of members from the vicinity of the Garonne, who, by the designation of Girondists, were subsequently celebrated not less for their virtues, their eloquence, and enthusiastic but impracticable opinions, than for their ultimate melancholy fate: the second, and more

* Campan.

resolute but least numerous, was composed of the turbulent leaders of the populace, who owed their power to connexion with the formidable clubs; and from occupying the higher benches of the hall, received the name of "The Mountain," afterwards so dreaded. Condorcet, profound and illustrious in science; Petion, calm and decided in action; Vergniaud, Isnard, Gaudet, Louvet, and Gensonne, glowing in eloquence, were the chief members of the former; Danton, Desmoulins, and Marat, the prime movers of the latter. The rest of the assembly was a body of irresolute, unknown, ignorant, and indefinable men, who courted safety in obscurity, and sought importance in vacillation. Professed successors to the independent party in the last chamber, they were attached to none in the present, but voted indiscriminately with either; and from this irresolution, or their tendency to unite with the strongest, they received the opprobrious designation of "The Belly;" a name which, from their position in the centre of the hall, was afterwards exchanged for "The Plain."

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8. The haughtiness of Louis roused the assembly's disposition at once into action. After constituting themselves, they respectfully solicited him to open the session on an early day; but he replied with contemptuous petulance, "I cannot attend your meeting until Friday,"—naming one more distant.* Indignant with this treatment, they immediately abolished the titles of *Sire* and *Majesty*, and ordered that a chair not more exalted than their president's should be allotted for the sovereign's reception. In a court which had long been a slave to etiquette, such an act excited the most ridiculous alarm. The

First
Meeting;
Quarrels
with the
Court.

* Mignet, i. 231.

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Decree
against the
Emigrants.

king, who, like others of narrow mind, tenaciously adhered to the shadows of power in proportion as its substance retreated from his grasp, resented the indignity with a threat to open the session by commission; and though he subsequently performed that ceremony in person, after the assembly had rescinded its decree, he experienced a new mortification on finding that the members sat down simultaneously with himself.* Such petty incidents sank deep into his breast; but signs of hostility more important, and more galling to his feelings, rapidly followed. Excited by exaggerated rumours from the frontiers, the legislature proceeded to enact rigorous measures against the emigrants. By one decree, the Count d'Artois, the king's brother, was enjoined to return within two months, under penalty of forfeiting his claim to the regency; and by another, all his companions in exile were declared foes to their country unless they at the same time re-entered it; their revenues appropriated to the state, in the event of refusal; and themselves punished with death, in the result of capture. The harshness of this law was purposely increased by Chapellier, a secret friend of the court, who introduced it in expectation of defeat; but to the dismay of himself and those he designed to save, it was adopted by the assembly with unmitigated severity; and the interposition of the king's negative produced a decisive rupture both with the chamber and the capital. Louis in vain attempted to conciliate public opinion without sanctioning such vengeance against those whose attachment to himself, and to his rights, was by him deemed meritorious; but by the assembly, a crime. He published letters to his

* Thiers, ii. 20.

brothers, and proclamations to their associates, in-
treating them to prevent such measures by returning. CHAP.
III.
These, however, produced no effect either in Paris 1791.
or on the frontiers; his subjects and the emigrants
alike believed him insincere; and subsequent events
confirmed their opinion.*

9. The affairs of the church produced another
collision with the senate. By a decree of last
assembly, those priests who refused the constitu- Decree
against the
Recusant
Clergy.
tional oath had been ejected from their benefices;
though they still enjoyed a stipend from the state,
and the inestimable privilege of private devotion.
In requital of this leniency, the recusant clergymen,
irritated by witnessing others in possession of their
churches and emoluments, exerted on their flocks all
that influence which religion maintains on the minds
of the ignorant; and so exasperated their followers
against the conformists and adherents of the law—
on whom they lavished the appellation of heretics,
and all those complimentary epithets which excited
sectarians so freely bestow,—that the danger of civil
war was imminent. To repress this peril, and to Oct. 29th.
punish its originators, the new legislature ordered the
non-jurists to be deprived of their pensions and their
liberty of worship; to be removed to parts of the
country distant from the scene of their present dis-
turbances, as well as of their past devotion; and to
be subjected to imprisonment if necessary.† By
Louis, who was attached to the refractory clergy by
superstitious sympathy and secret intercourse, this
was deemed a measure of great severity. They had
acquired unlimited power over his feeble intellect,
and as his conscience, as well as themselves, re-
proached him for sanctioning the church enactments
of last assembly, he determined to resist the decree

* See Campan, ii.; *passim*.

† Lacretelle, viii. 219.

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of the present ; and, with an energy of which he was rarely capable, declared he would die rather than concur. "A king," says Montesquieu, "who is attached to religion, is like a lion, obedient only to the voice of his keeper."* The dictates of prudence were unheeded, the command of his priest was obeyed. Against a compromise proposed by some of his ministers, to conciliate opposition, by dismissing the recusants from court, Louis was equally resolute : Mirabeau had formerly passed a whole night in persuading the court confessor to take the constitutional oath ; and the king chose another next day. Louis now sarcastically, yet justly, claimed for himself that freedom in religion which others enjoyed, and decided to oppose the decree by an unqualified negative.† Some constitutional members of the assembly supported his intention ; but it was violently opposed by the majority of the legislature ; and in the debate which ensued, language the most menacing was employed ; Camille Desmoulins, an eloquent republican, who resisted the royal intervention, concluding a revolutionary speech with the portentous declaration that "A great example must be made ;—the power of a king had its limits, and could not prevent the capture of the Bastile."‡

Resigna-
tion and
Character
of the
Ministry.

10. The assembly virtually realized its decree against the emigrants ; and the king was temporarily rescued from the consequences of his superstitious zeal by two events which, under other circumstances, would have increased his danger. The dissolution of his ministry, and the hostile preparations of Austria, now simultaneously engaged the attention of the nation, and for a time dispelled the consideration of minor objects. Amongst the heterogeneous members

* "Esprit des Loix," L. 24, c. 2. † Campan, ii. 127. ‡ Thiers, ii. 36.

of the cabinet, dissensions had long prevailed. The sentiments of Narbonne, the young and enterprising minister of war, ill accorded with those of the king's devoted adherent, Bertrand de Molleville, who has in fourteen ponderous volumes so feebly portrayed the history of that revolution to which his hostility is as great as the attachment the other bore it was ardent; and the disposition of Delessart, the irresolute minister of foreign affairs, was equally irreconcilable with that of Cahier de Gerville, the inflexible administrator of domestic. Narbonne enjoyed the confidence of the assembly, but was distrusted by the king; Molleville had acquired the suspicion of the one, and the favour of the other. Delessart, though attached to the constitution, was unpopular in the chamber, in consequence of subserviency and indecision; while De Gerville was esteemed for sincerity, though he possessed no capacity. Between such elements of discord no harmony could exist; and the exertions of Narbonne, with the intrigues of De Molleville, alike contributed to accelerate a rupture. The former had recently increased his influence in the legislature by the activity he displayed in restoring the army to an effective condition from a state of prostration; and having thus excited in the mind of the latter, both jealousy of power and dread of being supplanted, these passions were quickly communicated by the favourite to the king, who as rapidly dismissed the obnoxious rival. The commotion which his ejection produced in the chamber was great; and Louis vainly attempted to quell it by announcing that De Molleville had also retired. The court official escaped in obscurity; but the assembly impeached Delessart; supported Narbonne, and declared that, besides De Gerville, he alone of all the

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CHAP. cabinet possessed its confidence. The remaining
 III. ministers immediately resigned, and Louis in the
 1791. midst of his embarrassment was thus left without a
 government.

Embar-
 rassment
 of the
 King.

11. To find successors was no easy task ; as, according to an injudicious law of the constitution, ministers could not be chosen from either the present assembly or the past. The scope was thus limited, and the sovereign uncertain in whom to confide. His own adherents, constitutionalists as well as royalists, enjoyed no power in the senate, inspired no confidence in the country. Between him and the Girondists mutual distrust prevailed ; they neither believed in his sincerity, nor he in their capacity ;* and he could not select a ministry from the Jacobins, whose principles were still more subversive of his throne.

The New
 Ministry ;
 Character
 of Dumou-
 riez.

12. In the midst of this dilemma, Louis had recourse to Dumouriez, a general whose glittering talents had lately burst upon the scene, after struggling thirty years in the doubtful obscurity of adventure. Half a century had traversed his forehead, yet he still retained all the confidence of youth, though he had acquired but little of the caution of age. Versatile, bold, and enterprising, he possessed abilities equally ready and skilled in military operations and political intrigues ; but rash, unprincipled, and capricious, he was eminently a creature of the day ; had been a courtier before the revolution, a constitutionalist during the first assembly ;† was inclined to the Girondists now ; became a Jacobin under the republic, and finally concluded his career as an emigrant. He had lately acquired great reputation by a plan for conducting the impending hostilities, which

* Thiers, ii. 64.

† Mignet, i. 259.

was equally in accordance with the national feelings and the principles of the constitution. Active operations, he proposed, should be made until France attained her coveted boundaries of the Alps, the Rhine, the Pyrenees, and the ocean; after which, according to his suggestion, the war should be merely defensive. The conquest and annexation of Belgium, which this proposal included, flattered the national ambition; while the resolution to terminate offensive hostilities at this point, harmonized with the principles of a revolution which disclaimed aggression on other states. Dumouriez followed up this plausible scheme by orations in the hall of the Jacobins, which rendered him popular with that formidable club; and by a rare dexterity, or the friendship of Delaporte, a devoted royalist,* he at the same time acquired the confidence of the king. To the queen he was at first obnoxious, but she soon succumbed to his fascinating address, and yielded, or seemed to yield, to his control. While thus enjoying the confidence of so many contending parties, he was sincerely attached to none. True to his own interest alone, his principles were so loose that he was equally ready to serve either the senate or the sovereign; and he had the good fortune to retain for a short time the confidence of the one with the friendship of the other. But his want of sincerity eventually rendered him powerless alike as a friend or as a foe; though in the critical position in which he stood, it was scarcely possible that he could either trust or be trusted.

13. The new cabinet contained no other member of eminence, with the exception of Roland, the minister of the interior, a man of primitive simplicity,

* Thiers, ii. 67.

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1792.

and his
Wife.

severe virtue, and austere integrity; phlegmatic, yet devoted to liberty, but wholly incapable of guiding a revolution or of governing men. He owed his position and celebrity less to his own abilities, which were moderate and unpractical, than to the brilliant endowments of his wife, by whom, notwithstanding an inflexible disposition, he was in all respects controlled. Odious as such sway, contemptible as its slave, generally is, in this instance some redeeming points existed to diminish the degradation. Madame Roland, the daughter of a humble artisan, possessed the mind of a Roman matron. At nine years of age she lamented the lot which cast her on days of modern degeneracy; studied Plutarch instead of the Breviary, at mass;* and was now gifted with an eloquence and a spirit which Cicero would not have blushed to acknowledge, nor Cato hesitated to hail as congenial with his own. All that was wanting in her husband she supplied,† and her lofty intellect swayed the whole of the Girondist party: her resolution imparted energy to their speculations; her sagacity bestowed foresight on their views. A degree of boldness, inconsistent with female delicacy; a tinge of presumption, inherent in conscious power; and a share of prejudice, inseparable from human weakness, are the only shades to be found in her character; and these were now concealed by graceful manners and personal charms, for which she was at present not less illustrious than subsequently for heroic courage and future misfortunes.

War with
Austria.

14. The lofty tone and energetic conduct of Dumouriez soon brought the question of foreign intervention to a crisis. Leopold, the late emperor of

* See her *Memoirs*, i, 88-90; Paris, 1797.

† Mignet, i. 260

Austria, had latterly thrown off his pacific disposition, and been induced either by the solicitation of Louis and the emigrants, or by the instigation of the despotic courts in the north, to propose an armed congress for the purpose of rendering the new French constitution less republican, and of reinstating the king in some of his lost prerogatives. He had also encouraged the Alsatian princes of the Germanic confederation to refuse indemnity for their territories in France, where they still maintained all those feudal rights which the revolution had abolished in the rest of the kingdom, and he had threatened to support the elector of Treves with an armed force, if attacked by the French government for harbouring the emigrants. These indications of hostility to their new institutions excited the utmost indignation in the assembly, and the death of the emperor alone averted a declaration of war. His successor was still more inimically disposed, though no longer inspired by the martial king of Sweden, who, relying on the doubtful promise of Russian troops and Spanish money, had meditated an irruption into France, the execution of which his premature death by the hand of an assassin prevented. The presumptuous conduct of the Austrian ambassador, Cobentzal, who demanded the restoration of the French monarchy to its condition of 1789, brought the question to an issue. By this insulting denunciation of their new institutions, and insolent demand for the restitution of old abuses, a storm was raised in the senate, the capital, and the country, which a declaration of war alone could allay. Louis was accordingly compelled to proceed to the chamber, and with an agitation he could not conceal, to submit a proposition for hostilities, which the vote of the assembly

CHAP. instantly ratified, and the voice of the nation joyously
 III confirmed.*

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 Inauspi-
 cious Open-
 ing of the
 Campaign.

15. But the designs of Dumouriez for the invasion of Belgium, though boldly conceived, were feebly executed. The chief command was confided to Rochambeau, a general whose attachment to the constitution was doubtful; and the commencement of hostilities entrusted to Lafayette, whose affection for it was unquestionable, and his want of military talents equally undoubted. The latter was despatched to Namur with ten thousand men and orders to advance on Liege or on Brussels, whence, reinforced by forty thousand more, it was anticipated that in a few days he would over-run the whole of the Netherlands. To conceal this manœuvre, Lieutenant-General Biron was simultaneously directed with another detachment of ten thousand upon Mons; but he had scarcely reached his destination when a sudden panic seized his troops, on coming up with some detachments of the enemy; and two regiments of cavalry, without ever being engaged, raising a cry of "treachery," resorted to a disgraceful flight. Despite the exertions of their officers, the whole army followed the ignominious example, and the Austrians obtained possession of its camp almost without a struggle. Similar cowardice was simultaneously displayed by a body of two thousand foot and one thousand horse, who were advancing under Dillon from Lille. They had scarcely seen a few hostile troops ere they raised the same exclamation, and, leaving their baggage in the hands of the enemy, fled precipitately to the city, where, conjointly with the inhabitants, they turned their fury on their officers, two of whom, including the commander, were thus

* Thiers, ii. 79; and Lacretelle, ix. 92.

slain. Lafayette, on learning this disastrous intelligence, abruptly stopped his march.*

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III.

1792.

Conse-
quences of.

16. This unfortunate commencement of the campaign created general indignation. In Paris it was attributed to treachery,—of which the leading parties loudly accused each other; the Jacobins arraigning the constitutionalists for having wilfully betrayed the cause of liberty, in order to injure Dumouriez, who, by the magnificent gift of a red cap, had recently propitiated their club; while the others, with equal improbability, alleged that he secretly thwarted his own plan, for the purpose of destroying the reputation of Lafayette and Rochambeau. That treachery existed in some quarter may well be surmised; but amidst the numberless intrigues which at this period prevailed, the historian is at a loss to discover whether it proceeded from the jealousy of the general or the influence of the king. It is certain that Dumouriez henceforth acted an ambiguous part; that while he attempted to gain the Jacobins by presenting to their club a splendid *bonnet rouge*,† (the revolutionary emblem) he was secretly ranging himself on the side of the royalists; and this perfidy, with a suspicion that he appropriated the secret service money to his private pleasures,‡ gave rise to dissensions in the ministry, which led to the retirement of one of its members now, and shortly afterwards terminated in the secession of others still more important.

17. Events, more distant in time and space, simultaneously engaged the country's care. Besides external defeat and internal dissension, its attention was occupied by the painful consideration of murder at home and massacre abroad. In the city of Avignon,

Murders
in Avignon,
Oct. 30th,
1791.

* Thiers, ii. 87, 88; and Lacretelle, 107, 108.

† Thiers, ii. 79.

‡ Ibid. p. 91.

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1792.

Massacre
at St.
Domingo.

civic distractions had existed since its annexation from the pope's dominion to the French; and the animosity of parties gained strength, instead of being assuaged by time. In the fervour of their zeal, or the intensity of their hatred, the religious body had arisen, and murdered Lecuyer, one of their opponents, at the altar. The vengeance of the other was equally barbarous. Collecting its forces in nocturnal silence, the popular party surrounded the city, blockaded the gates, and arresting sixty of its adversaries,* consigned them to jail; but they had scarcely been incarcerated, when a band of assassins, impatient with the slow visitations of justice, burst into the prison, assailed the prisoners, and in obscurity, dark as the deeds of the night, committed their souls to Infinitude, and their bodies to the Rhone. On the same day, at the opposite extremity of the globe, a similar and still more extensive massacre occurred. The negroes of St. Domingo, disappointed in obtaining from the local legislature that freedom which the revolution had extended to the colonies, simultaneously arose in every part of the island, with all the ferocity of savages and ignorance of slaves. Fourteen hundred plantations† were instantly in flames, and their owners committed either to the raging element or to the more pitiless fury of the African. Scenes of brutality followed, from which humanity recoils. "One planter was sawed asunder," says a religious historian, who strangely remarks that the cruelties practised on the women "exceeded anything even in the annals of *Christian* ferocity;"‡ and adds, that by their own servants, "the indulgent masters were sacrificed equally with the inhuman;" though nature and reason alike revolt from the report.

* Lacretelle, ix. 53.

† Toulangeon, ii. 97.

‡ Alison; *History of Europe*, i. 299.

18. The French assembly, equally with the civilized world, was shocked by the recital of these barbarities; but the human mind is comparatively unaffected by distant evils. After passing with dire reluctance an act of amnesty to the assassins in the south, and for the emancipation of those in the west—the only remedies that could be applied,*—it proceeded to the consideration of a nearer danger, which, with other sources of disquietude, induced the chamber to declare its sitting permanent. The military household of the king had been gradually increased to six thousand men, from the number of eighteen hundred, which the constitution decreed;† and the two-thirds of National Guards, of whom it originally consisted, had in great measure been supplanted by troops of the line, on whom the court could with more confidence rely. Alarmed by the innovation, the legislature resisted these alterations in the guard, and denounced the conduct of the Duke of Brissac, its commander, by a decree which Louis was originally inclined to oppose; but, dissuaded by Dumouriez, he rushed into the opposite extreme, dismissed the whole band, refused to accept another, and thus left himself unprotected to the popular fury.‡

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1792.

Conduct
of the
Assembly.King's
Dismissal
of his
Guard.

May 30th.

19. Another act still more repugnant to his feelings followed. During the joy caused by the declaration of war, he had succeeded in placing a covert negative on the decree against the priests, which formerly brought him into collision with the chamber; but the assembly now substituted one still more obnoxious. To repress the commotion which the clergy were suspected of fomenting, it was enacted that any priest, on being denounced by twenty citizens, with the approbation of the district authorities,

Decree
against
Refractory
Priests.

* Toulangeon, ii. 98.

† Mignet, i. 271.

‡ Thiers, ii. 89.

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1792.

Servan's
Projected
Camp.Roland's
Letter.Conduct of
the King;

should be enjoined to quit his canton in twenty-four hours, the department in three days, and the kingdom within a month.* The severity of this measure was not in the king's estimation alleviated by an allowance of three livres a day to each of the refractory priests proceeding to the frontiers; nor was his displeasure diminished by a simultaneous project to invest with increased authority the body from whom it sprung. Servan, a republican member of the cabinet, had proposed to form a camp of twenty thousand confederated troops, for the protection of the chamber and city, without consulting either his colleagues or the king. Dumouriez in vain opposed the motion; and eight thousand National Guards, jealous of the interference with their privileges, or secretly impelled by the court,† petitioned against it ineffectually. The measure was hailed by such a majority of the assembly that the premier felt constrained to recommend the royal concurrence. Deeming the whole cabinet his enemies,‡ Louis was unwilling to yield, yet afraid to withstand; but while he fluctuated between expediency and inclination, a bold remonstrance, written by Madame Roland in her husband's name, decided his desire to resist. This energetic letter enjoined him to ratify the decrees, in terms which royal ears will rarely brook; warned him that it was not a time to retract or to temporise, and that opposition to the revolution would only cause it to be cemented by his blood.

20. Timid as Louis habitually was, there were moments when he could assume the dignity of a prince and the spirit of a man. Encouraged by his undaunted queen, who counselled him to "perish

* Lacretelle, ix. 91.

† Mignet, i. 271.

‡ Lacretelle, ix. 99.

with honour, if perish he must,"* (and deeply regretted the advice, when regret was unavailing) he commanded Dumouriez to dismiss Roland and two of his colleagues, who had concurred in the obnoxious effusion; and the minister obeyed, but only on condition of receiving the royal sanction to the decrees. Provided with such conciliatory powers, Dumouriez repaired to the chamber, and entering in the moment when it was excited by the recital of Roland's letter, he encountered a storm of disapprobation. Though assailed by the fiercest symbols of legislative wrath, he boldly addressed the assembly, and by that dauntless demeanour which rarely fails to captivate congregated men, produced a rapid revulsion in his favour; but it was of transient duration. In the interval the king had succumbed to his natural vacillation, to the scruples of his conscience, and the influence of his court. He preferred the admonition of his priest to the advice of his premier; and his new resolution to concur in the decree for the camp, but to oppose that against the clergy, naturally terminated in the resignation of his minister.

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1792.

and Resig-
nation of
the Mi-
nistry.

21. It is ill for a land when the prince has neither spirit to oppose, nor submission to obey. Louis's determination to resist was adopted too late. A blow, to be decisive, should descend with sudden, unerring aim, too quick to be parried, too heavy to be withstood. Such opposition might have checked the revolution in its outset; but it was now wholly inadequate, even if the king and the feeble ministry of Molleville, again hastily summoned to his aid, had possessed courage for the hazardous attempt. But his late resolution was immediately succeeded by ab-

Condition
of the
Court.

* Campan, ii. 195.

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1792.

ject despair. After the resignation of Dumouriez, Louis sank into a state of such depression that he remained several days speechless in the bosom of his family,* indulging in all the peril of solitary grief; and when roused from his lethargy by the efforts of his queen, he considered foreign aid his only safety. Impelled by this disastrous opinion, he despatched a secret letter to the Austrians, a passage of which, enjoining them to advance but to act with precaution,† was susceptible of treasonable interpretation, and subsequently received this fatal construction. The intreaties which Antoinette addressed to her native home were still more urgent. On returning from Varennes, she had professed attachment to the new constitution, and from the joy she evinced at consequent applause in the national theatre‡ (the last she ever received), it may be inferred that her profession, for the time, was sincere. But a fierce revulsion of popular feeling revived her early prejudices. Attacked by the republican journals for corresponding with Austria after hostilities were declared, and menaced by the sentinels of the palace, the fears of a woman were excited by the threats, the spirit of a queen was aroused by the insult; and swayed by these emotions, she conjured her native country to rescue her from danger in the land of her adoption. But these intreaties tended only to accelerate her fate; the succour lay on the banks of the Rhine, the peril existed on the shores of the Seine; and the expected aid arrived too soon to compromise her, but too late to save.

The Press
and Clubs
of Paris.

22. The licentious spirit of the press and the clubs now ruled the passions of the capital at their will.

* Campan, ii. 195.

† Bertrand de Molleville, viii. 37-40.

‡ Thiers, ii. 89.

Conspicuous amongst the former—thirty of whose journals daily inundated the city, forming part of the study of all, and the sole study of the greater number* —appeared Marat, a sanguinary maniac, in whose publication, named “The People’s Friend,” the murder of the royal family was openly enjoined; while his deeper and more dangerous ally, Robespierre, revelled in equally unbridled power, at the assembly of the Jacobins; and under the insidious mask of patriotism, instilled maxims not less dangerous to the sovereign and the people. In the hall of the Cordeliers, another political club, Danton, a daring revolutionist, endowed by nature with the rude eloquence which stirs a multitude, reigned in rival supremacy; and the formidable bodies they controlled were rendered more powerful than ever by the rash conduct of Molleville, the minister, who now set the dangerous example of paying their frequenters, in expectation of either propitiating their favour or obtaining their aid. This inconsiderate ordinance was no sooner promulgated by the government than men forsook their daily employments, and women abandoned their domestic avocations, to mingle in public assemblies, where their pecuniary and political passions alike were gratified. But though they freely received the wages of corruption (two francs a day),† they obeyed not the voice of the corrupter. They arraigned his measures more fiercely than ever, and all his efforts to enlist them in his service were vain. The Feuillans club, where the philosophic republicans originally met, and the constitutionalists still assembled, was the only popular body which shewed a disposition to support him; but it had long since been stripped of importance by the turbulent energy of the

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 III.

1792.

* Burke, i. 566.

† Thiers, ii. 125.

CHAP. others, who now aspired to rule the metropolis through
 III. the agency of Petion, the dull, cold, and phlegmatic
 1792. newly-elected republican mayor.

Insurrec- 23. A letter, which Lafayette addressed to the
 tion on assembly, from his distant head-quarters, accusing
 20th June. the Jacobins as authors of the public calamities, in-
 creased their boldness without diminishing their
 power. The writer being already as unpopular in the
 chamber as he had long been with the court, it pro-
 duced no effect on that body ; and its anticipated im-
 pression on the public was dexterously evaded by
 the suppression of the document, on a fictitious doubt
 of its authenticity. On pretext, however, of refuting
 the calumny it was alleged to contain, the suburb
 St. Antoine, the most democratic division of the ca-
 pital, demanded permission to present a petition to
 the assembly, as well as to the king ; and an over-
 whelming majority of the legislature, either impelled
 by alarm, or irritated by Louis's opposition to its
 decrees, in an hour dismal for the country, the sove-
 reign, and themselves, unwisely complied with the
 demand. A petition, couched in the most revolution-
 ary language, was accordingly brought to the bar ;
 and thirty thousand of its supporters, consisting of a
 promiscuous assemblage of men, women, and chil-
 dren, the last with olive branches, the others with
 muskets and pikes in their hands, during three
 hours defiled through the legislative hall, under a
 leader with sabre unsheathed over-head, surrounded
 by banners with violent inscriptions, and raising ex-
 clamations still more atrocious. Proceeding thence
 to the garden of the Tuilleries, with savage menaces,
 and a calf's head elevated on a pike as an emblem
 appropriate of aristocracy,* they dispersed the feeble

* Thiers, ii. 135.

guard, rushed through the court-yard, and assailed with hatchets the gates of the palace, which were in vain shut to oppose them. A few guns might, a moment before, have saved the monarchy, in the estimation of one who now surveyed the scene, and enjoyed its future fruits.* But at present there was neither spirit to command, nor resolution to resist. The king passively awaited the event; his guardians ignominiously fled; the insurgents assailed the door of his chamber, and, on obtaining admission, vociferously demanded his assent to the decrees. But Louis chose rather to encounter the rage of his populace, than consent to the ruin of his priests. He replied, with unexpected energy, that “It was neither a time nor a place.” A hand was raised to strike, from which he naturally shrank: a reproach of cowardice was uttered,† which he nobly repelled by seizing the arm of a bystander, and carrying it to his breast, demanded if the heart did not beat with serenity. “Place your hand on my bosom,” said the unfortunate monarch, “you will see whether I am afraid.” Touched by his magnanimity, the multitude relented; forgot or withdrew their demand for the decrees, but forced him to submit to the indignity of placing the revolutionary red cap on his head, of participating in their inebriating beverages, and sharing in their more revolting applause; while in a distant apartment sat his ill-fated queen, weeping with her children, over his danger and degradation. The eldest of these, a princess of tender years, freely mingled her tears with those of the mother; but the young dauphin, an

* Napoleon, *see* Bourrienne, *Memoires*, i. 73, 74.

† Such is the account given by the royalist historians, but the best authorities represent that neither violence nor insult was offered; that a grenadier only extended his hand to support the monarch, and encouraged him not to be afraid.—Thiers, ii. 139; and Mignet, i. 279.

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1792.

Condition
of the
Queen.

infant son, smiled on the tumultuous scene, in childish admiration of the uproar, and happy ignorance of its relation to his future doom.*

24. Leaving the king uninjured, a body of the rioters advanced with fierce imprecations to the council chamber, where the queen had sought shelter, but found no protection, except a table hastily ranged in front, and a few adherents whose terror equalled their loyalty. Madame Elizabeth, the sister of the king, encountered their fury in the passage, and, mistaken for the queen, narrowly escaped from vengeance. "Down with the Austrian!" was the exclamation raised on seeing her, and an attendant's opportune disclosure of the error alone saved her from falling: "Ah, suffer them to believe I am so, that she may escape," was the heroic reply; and her devotedness assuaged their resentment. They proceeded to the chamber, and the adoption of the revolutionary emblem by the child saved the life of the mother. A red cap was thrown by one of the rioters, and the queen having placed it on the dauphin's head, Santerre, the leader of the insurrection, a boisterous but not blood-thirsty man, interposed in her behalf. "The poor child is smothered," he exclaimed, on observing the infant struggling in the cap,† which he immediately removed, and by this sally restored the better feelings of his fol-

* The classic reader may here be reminded of that exquisite scene in the fifth book of the *Iliad*, where the thoughts of Helen, as she surveys the Grecian war-games from the battlements of Troy, revert to her native home, and the scenes of her infancy, which she describes to Priam in terms of glowing joy, unconscious of all that had passed and was passing there; a scene which Pope has translated with a beauty almost unequalled by the original:—

"Thus spoke the Fair, nor knew her brother's doom,
Wrapp'd in the cold embraces of the tomb,
Adorn'd with honours on their native shore,
Silent they slept, and dreamt of wars no more."—*Iliad*, v. 240, &c.

† Thiers, ii. 141.

lowers. Petion, the mayor of Paris, with some deputies from the assembly, shortly afterwards arrived, and, by their persuasion, the multitude was induced to retire without violence. Louis at the same time entered with the plebeian bonnet on his head. In the midst of the tumult he had overlooked the assumption of this ridiculous decoration; but the queen, on seeing it, burst into tears of indignation. He instantly threw it off with contempt, and gave vent to his emotion freely in unison with hers. At a scene so affecting, the sternest republicans could not refrain from exhibiting signs of compassion. "You weep," said the queen to Merlin de Thionville, who thus evinced his sympathy, "you weep to see a king and his family so abused by a people whose happiness has been their only aim." "Yes, madam," was the unfeeling yet flattering reply, "my tears fall for a beautiful wife and an amiable mother, but neither for king nor queen; sovereigns are the objects of my hatred."*

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25. An apprehension of renewed insurrection brought Petion, the mayor, next day to the palace; and a scene of royal reproach and republican retort terminated in rival proclamations from the king and the commune. Each of these documents was characteristic of its origin; the edict of the king displaying feebleness under the assumption of firmness, while that of the municipality concealed menace under the mask of moderation. Louis represented the riot as an effort to overturn the monarchy by the murder of the monarch, and declared that no violence should overawe his opinion, or extort his consent to the decrees. The civic authorities ostensibly warned the citizens against renewal of the riot, and advised them to respect the

Conduct of
the King
and Com-
mune.

* Campan, ii. 202, 203.

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king, but at the same time significantly enjoined them to cause the assembly to be respected. The adherents of each party fomented the excitement which these publications produced ; the partisans of the court describing the late tumult as an attempt to assassinate the royal family, and those of the city accusing the royalists of having fomented the insurrection, as well as desiring another, for the purpose of firing on the people. Between the two factions the legislature preserved an attitude of indecision. A few constitutional members demanded the punishment of the insurgents, but were silenced by the Jacobin retort that it was difficult to punish forty thousand criminals ;* and though the conduct of Petion was referred to a legislative tribunal, which suspended him for suspected connivance, the penalty only increased his popularity. Beyond this, and a formal decree against armed petitioners, the assembly neither punished for the past, nor adopted precautions for the future ; a fatal leniency, which encouraged the fierce democrats within the chamber, and the more ferocious demagogues without.

Partial Reaction in the Country.

26. The affecting but inglorious fortitude displayed by Louis during the recent insurrection, raised mingled emotions of pity and admiration in the breasts of many of his subjects. An address with twenty thousand signatures expressed the sympathy of the loyalists in the capital, and numerous others from the provincial cities indicated that royalty had still many adherents in the country. Had a bold attempt been made, the monarchy might still have been saved ; but though his supporters were ready, the sovereign was weak. He evinced returning feebleness with reviving safety ; and the event which aroused the indignation of

* Thiers, ii. 149.

the loyal, excited the fears of the timid, and the hopes of the turbulent. Marseilles, distinguished above the metropolis itself for republican spirit, poured in petitions to the assembly for suppression of the monarchy; and other provincial towns daily repeated its demands. Between these opposing parties the chamber at first remained irresolute; though its sympathy with the republicans was displayed by the cold reception of a petition from Lafayette, demanding the punishment of the rioters and the suppression of the Jacobins. But the rapid approach of invading foes decided the legislature to abandon a sovereign suspected of secret communication with the enemy, and who, if entitled to admiration for a transient exhibition of passive courage, had shewn himself wholly destitute of that active energy which, in times of emergency, qualifies a prince to be at once the guide and the guardian of his people.

27. By treaties recently concluded at Mantua and Pilnitz, between the continental powers and emigrant princes, Prussia had abandoned her neutrality, and coalesced with Austria, to restore the old government of France, or to render the new less republican. With this view eighty thousand of her troops were now menacing the Rhine, and a powerful Austrian army was advancing to the French frontiers, with the expressed resolution of arriving in six weeks at Paris. The adjoining electoral princes were either in a state of open hostility, or still more dangerous secret enmity. Russia, too, had joined the coalition; but less from hostile motives than the insidious design of seizing Poland, while Austria and Prussia marched their forces in an opposite direction; and though Sweden remained inactive since the death of her sovereign, the kings of Sardinia and Spain had agreed with the em-

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III.

1792.

Foreign
Hostilities;
Treaties of
Mantua
and Pil-
nitz.

CHAP. artillery, and the still more tumultuous noise of the
 III. excited capital, pronounced the solemn words, " Citizens, the country is in danger ! " *
 1792.

July 11th.
 Distressing
 situation of
 the King.

31. A call so impressive was calculated to rouse the coldest to arms. To unsheath the sword in defence of our country is described as the best of omens in the earliest of human annals.† But the declaration which inspired enthusiasm in the turbulent nation carried dismay into the breast of the feeble monarch. On every side he discerned only peril and perplexity, and was again immersed in an abyss of despair. Plunged in grief with his family amid the recesses of his palace, he had, since the recent insurrection, lived in hourly terror of public assassination, or domestic poison ;‡ shunned society as dangerous, solitude as still more dreadful : and when the prolongation of his life at last dispelled this alarm, a dread that like England's Charles he should perish by the sentence of his senate, supervened. Less susceptible minds became impressed with a like apprehension : nor was the anticipation idle ; the present has no guide, the future no guardian, so impressive and unerring as the past.

Lafayette's
 Plan for
 Louis's
 Escape.

32. Impressed by this alarm, Lafayette had, in unison with Luckner, the commander of the army, proposed a scheme for the king's escape, during an approaching festival in celebration of the constitution. The plan resembled Bouillè's in design, and success appeared probable ; but either from repugnance to the general, or confidence in the allies, it was rejected by Louis as impracticable ; and the self-devoted monarch, after a feeble and vain attempt to display his authority by confirming the mayor's suspension—

* Moniteur, Seance du 11 Juillet, 1792.

† 'Εἰς οἰων ἀπὶς ἀμείνω, &c.—*Iliad*, xii. 243.

‡ Campan, ii. 206.

which only caused the assembly to reinstate the official—prepared to perform his degrading part in the national jubilee.

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33. On the 14th of July, the nation again assembled in the Field of Mars, in honour of a constitution no longer existing. The events of the day, and the circumstances under which they occurred, differed widely from those of former celebrations. The altar of the country was now replaced by a broken pillar, on one side of which rose a monument to those who had fallen, or were about to fall on the frontiers; while on the other stood a lofty tree bedizened with mock representations of crowns, coronets, orders, and titles of nobility, the keys of St. Peter and emblems of religion, the symbols of justice and signs of art, to be fired by the king's hand, in significance of feudality destroyed. Instead of three hundred priests, eighty-three republican tents, representing the departments of France, were reared to depict a nation in arms; and a disorderly multitude of inebriated men and infuriated women, followed by a body of scarcely more regular troops, with menacing exclamations and revolutionary songs, replaced the sixty thousand guards and hallelujahs of the last commemoration. A large tent in the centre of all was allotted to the assembly and the king; the former of whom entered it with an attitude of dignity, while the latter endeavoured to assume an aspect of tranquillity, which the tears of his wife and family belied. With poignant grief they saw him depart from the palace, and anticipated he never would return. In expectation of popular violence they had armed him with a secret cuirass; but he escaped uninjured. The multitude requited the confidence he displayed; were satisfied with the subscription of the oath, without the cere-

Constitutional Festival.

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1792.

Prepara-
tions for
another
Insurrec-
tion.

mony of burning the tree; and he returned in safety to his home in the midst of applause, which they substituted with fickle alacrity for their recent imprecations.*

34. But this was the last time Louis received even the transient acclamations of his subjects. Convinced of his perfidy, they resolved on his dethronement; and preparations were daily made for the attempt. The assembly despatched to the frontiers those regiments which evinced attachment to the king, and detained in Paris the newly raised battalions who were devoted to its cause. The Jacobin club instituted an insurrectionary committee; the commons concerted measures for rebellion; and Petion, the mayor, was induced either by favour or by fear to facilitate the effort.† The recent insurgents, who had failed in extorting the royal assent to the decrees, panted to renew their violence; and a new pretext, with another leader, was alone wanted to render a second irruption more decisive. The cautious conduct of the king, however, who, in expectation of the allies' approach, abstained from any exertion of prerogative, deprived them of the first; and to find a substitute for Santerre, whose clemency disarmed their resolution, was a task still more difficult. Two fanatical Jacobins were ready to destroy themselves in the vicinity of the palace, and throw the odium of murder on its inmates, to afford foundation for the one;‡ but none could be found to supply the other. Robespierre, the most influential member of the club, was disqualified by a fastidious demeanour, and constitutional cowardice, from conducting a popular revolt. He freely fomented the fiercest passions of the

Character
of Robe-
spierre.

* Campan, ii. 218-220; Thiers, ii. 207-209.

† Thiers, ii. 212.

‡ Ibid. p. 196.

populace, but cautiously abstained from vulgar association; and aimed, by a gloomy seclusion in privacy, to acquire the reputation of patriotic austerity in public. Indifferent to effusion of blood, he yet eschewed open violence; and though he never shrank in advising sanguinary measures, he studiously refrained from their execution in person. Vain and vindictive, he was eager to sacrifice those who had wounded his ardent egotism and insufferable pride, by representing his personal enemies as the foes of the state; but bold in sedition, he was timid in strife, and though he panted for their extermination, he had neither courage to give the signal, nor capacity to conduct the slaughter. He was moreover devoid of that eloquence which sways a multitude. No grace adorned his elocution, no passion inspired his oratory, which would have been alike cold, unimpressive, and contemptible, but for his inflexible pertinacity, and the character he had acquired for incorruptible patriotism. A slender figure, an anxious countenance, and embarrassed air, also deprived him of the power which a commanding aspect and majestic deportment possess on the minds of the vulgar; and his distant, irresolute address inspired neither his friends with love, nor his foes with fear.

CHAP.
III.

1792.

35. Marat, a native of Neufchatel, whose fame as Marat. a journalist rivalled Robespierre's as a Jacobin, was still more divested of human feelings and human sympathies. Originally a veterinarian in the royal stables, some real injury or imaginary insult contributed, with a phrenzied imagination, to throw him into the ranks of the revolution; and under the designation of "Friend of the People," he promulgated maxims so atrocious that even extreme republicans considered them to emanate from reason's aberration.

CHAP. He pronounced all civilized classes aristocrats, and
 III. proposed to exterminate them all. With two hundred

1792. assassins he offered to complete the revolution,* and by the fall of three hundred thousand heads he aspired to confirm it.† Like Draco, he recognized no punishment but death; mingled the most repulsive cynicism with the most revolting cruelty; yet had the merit, if such it be, of denouncing his victims without personal hatred.‡ His enthusiastic energy and insane sincerity rendered his power omnipotent with the savage masses of the capital; but though his sway was terrific while enforcing his doctrines from the dungeons in which he dwelt, he was physically and mentally incompetent to lead men in a day of danger. His dwarfish form, hideous overgrown head, livid countenance, squalid figure, and disgusting deportment, would have deprived him of personal influence, even if he had not been devoid of that animal courage which, though one of the most common, is perhaps the most captivating of virtues in man.

Danton. 36. Danton, a disappointed member of the Paris bar, who constituted the last of an already formidable triumvirate, was endowed with all the qualities for leading a fierce assemblage of the people. His bold, reckless demeanour impressed them with admiration, his athletic person with awe, and his deep, menacing voice with fear. Described as the Mirabeau of the populace,§ and glorying in the designation, he shared in some of the great orator's virtues, and eclipsed him in all his vices. His rude, but stirring and natural eloquence harmonized with the understanding, while his grovelling sensuality reduced him to a level with

* Thiers, ii. 201.

† Barbareux, *Memoire de*, p. 59; Paris, 1817.

‡ Mignet, i. 353.

§ *Ibid.*, p. 321.

the meanest of the multitude. A mercenary republican and venal royalist, he in secret received the bribes of the court,* though he loudly denounced it in public; and assured his dupes that it was necessary to stigmatise in order to save them. The conclusion of his career leaves it doubtful whether in this respect he were sincere, or added the crime of a traitor to the guilt of a hypocrite; but at present he was a revolutionist of the most violent order; shrank from no crime that appeared useful, from no sacrifice which seemed desirable. Audacity was his watchword, the spring of all his acts, and the sole source of his success. But though inexorable to masses, he was not inclement to individuals;† he pursued his aim without pity; yet, when gained, he could listen to the dictates of mercy, or to the voice of remorse; and this lingering humanity, or his doubtful relation to the court, contributed, with the uncertainty of success, to cause the secret fomentor of the revolt to be supplanted, in conducting it, by Westermann, a resolute and ruthless Alsatian soldier of fortune, who, on Danton's recommendation, was chosen to lead the attack.

CHAP.
III.

1792.

37. The king was apprized of the expected outbreak, and the court made all those preparations for his protection, which a small but devoted body of Swiss guards, a numerous yet feeble band of domestic adherents, and an expensive though useless secret police could afford. Distrusting these means of defence, his friends in the constitutional party advised him to quell the rising storm by a voluntary abdication; while those who were personally attached to his interest, counselled him to avoid it by flight; but the tenacity with which he clung to the last remains

Liancourt's
Plan to
rescue the
King.

* Thiers, ii. 228.

† Mignet, i. 321.

CHAP. of his power prompted him to reject the one, and the
 III. disastrous result of his former attempt to shrink from

1792. the other. A plan prepared by the duke of Liancourt for his removal to the castle of Gaillon in Normandy—whose advantageous proximity to the sea would facilitate escape into England in the event of necessity—was accordingly abandoned on the eve of execution. Other proposals were suggested; but they only increased the king's indecision; and either from his professed reluctance to infringe the constitution,* or his more probable reliance on the allies' advance,† he remained in the capital, a victim to that lethargic irresolution, the most fatal foe which a man, when surrounded by danger, has to encounter.

The Duke
 of Brun-
 swick's Pro-
 clamations.

38. The approach of the Prussians compromised his safety, and increased his danger; a preliminary proclamation which the Duke of Brunswick, their commander, published at Coblenz, and the royalists almost simultaneously promulgated in Paris, having excited feelings of universal indignation. By this address the inhabitants of France were ordered, under the severest penalties, to submit to the king, to restore him to his ancient authority, and to assist those advancing to his relief. All his past and present acts were pronounced constrained and abortive; and his subjects were commanded to yield no obedience to the assembly, to offer no resistance to the invader, on pain of having their towns destroyed by fire, and their metropolis consigned to military massacre.‡ This impolitic document, which exaggerated real grievances and invented more, masked the miseries of war under the mantle of religion, and superadded the insults of tyranny to the insolence of

* Lacretelle, ix. 158.

† Campan. ii. 203.

‡ State Papers, Annual Register for 1792.

conquest—produced an effect diametrically opposed to its intention. The nation was roused to resistance instead of being reduced to submission. It preferred the chance of defeat to the certainty of dishonour; and welcomed ruin by invasion to disgrace by obedience. All classes rose to repel the ruthless insulter. A general armament was prepared throughout the country; and a universal insurrection hastened in the capital, where the commotion was increased by the arrival of five hundred Marseillaise, who, with ceaseless vigour and untiring energy, had marched from their homes in the south to share in the danger which menaced the metropolis. Renewed vigour was communicated to the daring democrats of Paris by this unknown race of high-minded rebels, whose war-whoop gave a new and lasting impulse to freedom. The terror inspired by the fierce eyes, ferocious looks, and firm determination of these swarthy adventurers, was increased by the mystery which hung over their origin. Few knew how they lived, but it was their own expressive boast that “they knew how to die.”

CHAP.
III.

1792.

The Mar-
seillaise.

39. A hostile encounter between the Marseillaise band and a party of royalists, on its entrance into Paris, increased the popular animosity; and this was excited to fury by the care which the court ostentatiously bestowed on its wounded adherents, who fled to the palace from the fray. In extenuation, the courtiers in vain asserted the dictates of humanity, and the king, with still less effect, disclaimed connexion with Brunswick's injudicious proclamation, of which the sole result was the loss of his throne. The discovery of his abandoned intention to fly, which the pusillanimity of Luckner had betrayed, completed their phrenzy; and a rumoured,

Their
Encounter
with the
Royalists.

CHAP.
III.

1792.

but unfounded design of the royalists to poison the confederated camp, by mixing glass with its bread, roused the rage of the multitude to madness. Petion, the mayor, in the name of forty-eight of the sections of Paris, proceeded to the bar of the assembly, and demanded Louis's deposition. A democratic district of the city immediately abjured the royal authority ; and the others were with difficulty induced to concur in the postponement of their petition till the 9th of August, when they resolved to enforce it by strength of arms.

Eve of the
10th of
August.

40. The 9th of August, 1792, foreboded all the horrors of the memorable morrow. The assembly's refusal to impeach Lafayette for having concerted the king's escape, set all the revolutionists of the capital in commotion. Petion, the mayor, now retracing his steps in fear, repaired to the hall of the Jacobins, and vainly attempted to assuage their fury, by pledging the chamber to depose the king if the insurrection were suppressed. The compromise was indignantly rejected by Chabot, the president of the club ; and the city sections immediately put themselves into action. The drum beat to quarters, the divided National Guards assembled at their posts, and the united brigands of the suburbs flocked to their banners. Danton, with his associates Desmoulins, Santerre, and Carra, were employed during the day in marshalling and inflaming their followers : Marat found at once occupation and safety by sounding the tocsin ; but the more cowardly Robespierre had disappeared from the scene. At midnight the populace, on the discharge of a fusil, flew to arms ; the deep portentous sound of the great civic bell announced the approach of the irruption ; and carried dismay into the hearts of the distracted court, as well

as of many a gallant man in whose breast the voice of fear had never before been heard.

CHAP.
III.

41. The king had deprived himself of his chief protection by disbanding his constitutional guard when its modification was proposed by the assembly; and the chamber subsequently left him still more exposed to popular violence by dispatching the regular troops to the frontier. The devoted regiment of Swiss Guards alone remained; but its strength was diminished by the absence of a battalion which had been sent to open a route for the late contemplated flight. Scarcely nine hundred of them now remained in the palace; and though their courage, as well as fidelity, was undoubted, the removal of their artillery had deprived them of the chief means of defence. A band of court adherents, with some disbanded French and National Guards, approaching to a thousand in all, increased the number of the defenders without adding to their force; as the first, though devoted to the person of their sovereign, were rendered unserviceable either by inexperience or by age;* and the others proved so disaffected that they afterwards joined the insurgents, and by their treacherous support hastened his fall. The Swiss thus constituted his sole reliance; and, enfeebled as they were, might have repelled the assailants, if commanded with energy: but their leader was already in the dominions of death. During an early part of the night Petion, the mayor, had been summoned to the palace, by the advice of Mandat, the colonel of the regiment, to sign an order for repulsion of violence by exertion of force, and detained as a hostage for the conduct of the people. The assembly, however, immediately liberated him

1792.

Conduct of
the Court.

Eve of In-
surrection.

* Campan, ii. 231.

CHAP.
III.

1792.

Murder of
Mandat.

Aug. 10th.

by a summons to their bar ; and a new municipality, elected in the interval, ordered Mandat to attend them in the city hall, for the purpose of revoking the manual extorted. The unfortunate officer was commanded by his king to obey ; and considering life as worthless if lost with honour, he instantly set out, reached his destination in safety, was subjected to a few questions, and sent nominally to a prison, but had scarcely left the chamber, ere he was barbarously murdered at the door. The intelligence of his death dispelled the last hope of the feeble monarch, who in this world now saw nothing but despair. Louis passed the rest of the night in imploring the assistance of Heaven, while his heroic queen arrayed that of earth, and counselled him to rely on his own. His abject prayers were unheeded, his enraged people was at hand ; and finding celestial invocation idle, he was at last roused by the energy of Antoinette, who in this hour of alarm renounced her sex's timidity. Encouraged by her exhortation, he advanced to a window, and surveyed his defenders below. The regal salutation "Vive le Roi !" vibrated again, for the last time, on his ear ; and the acclamations of his adherents inspired him with fortitude to descend. But the violent shouts of the adjoining multitude struck dismay into his breast, and after a feeble attempt to review the soldiers, he returned to the palace with a feebler exclamation of despair. His dauntless queen in vain exhorted him to preserve a throne or find a grave in its precincts, and expressed her own resolution to be torn from the walls.* "There !" she said, presenting him a pistol, "now is the time to shew your courage ;" but Louis was silent. Her aquiline nose distended, her

* Campan, ii. 232.

Austrian lip quivered with emotion,* as she again conjured him to resist. The pusillanimous monarch, however, was deaf to her calls; and a deputation having arrived from the assembly, he resolved to accept the shelter they offered in the chamber. The high-minded Antoinette in vain again implored him to remain in the palace, and live in honour or die with glory. "You wish, madame," said the deputy Roederer, a member of the senate, "to render yourself responsible for the death of the king, his family, and all in the palace."† These words confirmed Louis's abject resolution. Destitute alike of determination and of dignity, he exclaimed, "Gentlemen, there is nothing more to do here;"‡ and despite the remonstrances of his magnanimous wife, for ever left the home of his ancestors, and passed through the menacing crowd to the scarcely less hostile hall.

CHAP.
III.

1792.

42. The sun had now arisen resplendent on the scene, serene in contrast with the violence below. But man is rarely taught by nature's peaceful precepts. The departure of the king failed to avert the attack on the palace: the insurgents acquired confidence from his weakness, strength by his desertion; and the combat commenced though the cause was gone. Having forced the chief gateway with hatchets, they rushed into the extensive court-yard, and turning against the palace some pieces of artillery imprudently left unguarded, commanded the inmates to submit. A brief parley ensued, the multitude shewing less violence than might have been anticipated, and the Swiss throwing down their cartridges in token of amity;§ but the assailants refused all terms except surrender; and, on this being refused,

Insurrec-
tion on
10th of
August,
1792.Attack on
the Palace.

* Toulangeon, ii. 240.

† Mignet, i. 307.

‡ Mignet, i. 307.

§ Ibid., i. 309.

CHAP. they attempted entrance by force. In the struggle,
 III. some blows were hastily given, shots as rapidly fol-

1792. lowed—from which side first is unknown;* nor is this of moment, as it was the determination of the one to attack, and the duty of the other to resist. A murderous conflict succeeded; but the artillery of the rioters boomed harmlessly over the palace, and trained resolution soon assumed its sway over undisciplined numbers. The Swiss by a steady fire repulsed the insurgents; and, having recovered their cannons, discharged them on the fugitives with fearful effect. The discomfited populace fled to the suburbs in dismay; and this vigorous resistance, which would have crushed the insurrection in its birth, might have quelled it even now, had not the gallant band been restrained in their victorious career. But at this moment an order arrived from the infatuated king, commanding them to cease firing and repair to the assembly. Loyal alike in life and death, the devoted troops immediately obeyed. The greater number, with grounded arms, submissively followed the messenger through a sanguinary fire from the returning insurgents; and those who remained in the palace, ignorant of the command, or unable to escape, fell victims to their own fidelity and the ferocity of the multitude. As the defenders retreated, the assailants reappeared in redoubled numbers, and the Marseillaise with irresistible fury. The victors were now vanquished in turn. The combat was soon converted to a massacre. The unhappy Swiss, unable to resist, threw down their arms, and were murdered when resistance was no more. The infuriated insurgents revelled for some hours in all the excesses of victory; and after plundering the

Massacre
 of the
 Swiss.

* Mignet, i. 309.

palace, proceeded to lay their spoils at the bar of the assembly.*

CHAP.
III.

43. The king, on arriving in the chamber, discovered that but a moment intervenes between the loss of a sovereign's power and a subject's homage. "I come," he said, "to prevent a great crime by placing myself in the midst of you ;"† and assumed a seat by the president's side. But his words were considered as the emanation of cowardice, or the instigation of guilt. Vergniaud, who occupied the chair, oracularly uttered "The assembly will die at its post ;" and appeared, with the greater number of the legislature, uncertain which side to join, till the shout of victory was heard. On the first discharge of musketry, twenty of its members were despatched to appease the rage of the combatants ; but were either dispersed, or failed in the attempt. Louis's own fatal order followed ; and in proportion as the insurgents prevailed, the senators became decided. The king was, on the motion of Chabot the Jacobin, removed from his seat in the hall, and consigned with his family to an adjoining recess,‡ lest the freedom of debate were interrupted.§ But free deliberation had more to dread from the victorious people than from the vanquished prince. A band of insurgents, uttering fierce exclamations, burst into the hall ; and the senators descended to quell the tumult by mingling in shouts for liberty, equality, and the nation, while the uninterrupted sound of artillery announced that all these were then disorganized. Towards noon the scene of disorder was increased by the cries of "Victory !" from a thousand voices,

1792.
Conduct
of the
Assembly.

* Mignet, i. 310.

† Moniteur, Seance du 10 Aug., 1792.

‡ The Loge of the Logographe, or Reporter's Box.

§ Moniteur, Seance du 10 Aug., 1792.

CHAP. announcing that the oldest monarchy of Europe was
III. subverted, in the person of its feeblest and least
1792. guilty representative. When the vociferations subsided, a still more frightful silence succeeded. The unhappy sovereign then learned that his refusal of the sword had led to renunciation of the sceptre ; and was constrained to listen to the intoxicated shouts of his subjects, while the president pronounced the ruin of his power, by declaring that the assembly suspended the king, appointed a plan for the education of the Dauphin, and convoked a National Convention.*

Deposition
of the
King.

44. The deeds of this eventful day did not terminate with this important decree, which in a moment overturned a monarchy that had existed for centuries, and consigned the descendant of sixty kings to the custody of his people. Within a few hours other acts were passed for the restoration of Roland and Servan, with their associates, to office ; and for the appointment of the ministry as an executive council to conduct the administration of affairs under direction of the assembly. In deference to the popular will, Danton was nominated minister of justice, though during the late insurrection his conduct had outraged all her sacred dictates. The decrees which Louis opposed, immediately received the force of law ; the refusal of the monarch's sanction being considered their highest commendation. Commissioners were despatched to the armies and provinces, to annul the authority of the commanding officers, if necessary, and gain the troops and inhabitants to the recent changes. The new municipality of Paris divided with the legislature the power of the state ; and, incited by its members, the brigands of the capital flocked to the bar with their spoils and prisoners,

* Thiers, ii. 263.

demanding a division of the one, and the punishment of the other. In compliance with their entreaty, the plunder of the palace was placed at the disposal of the commune, and the Swiss were consigned to the various prisons of the capital, to await a fate more dreadful than that which they temporarily escaped. Acts of disinterested generosity were strangely blended with those of degrading insult. Miserable beings, clothed in rags, scrupulously deposited in the hall the valuable spoils they had captured. One wretched man, whose appearance indicated the extremity of distress, having found the king's purse in the garden of the Tuilleries, returned it to his sovereign with the contemptuous exclamation, "There's your money; had you found mine, you would not have been so honest!"* After enduring such humiliations for fifteen hours, the royal family was consigned, at one in the morning, with a formidable guard and feeble retinue, to the palace of the Luxemburg, and subsequently to the prison of the Temple. Louis had surveyed the scenes of the day with passive indifference; and notwithstanding the raillery of the multitude, indulged his naturally excessive appetite in the hall;† but his queen and sister were overwhelmed in grief, and insensible to the impulse of either hunger or thirst.

CHAP.
III.

1792.

45. The assembly, after a meeting protracted during eighteen hours, separated at three in the morning; but its acts, rapid and decisive as they were, failed to satisfy the popular demands. On its assemblage next day, the royal family were replaced in the alcove, to undergo renewed degradation; an infuriated multitude again repaired to the chamber,

Subse-
quent Pro-
ceedings.

* Barbaroux relates this incident in his Memoirs, but it is, on less authority, contradicted by Lacretelle.—(See Lacret. ix. 243.)

† Thiers, iii. 9.

CHAP.
III.

1792.

Jacobin
Police.

demanding the instant punishment of the Swiss, the unqualified deposition of the king, and the immediate declaration of a republic, instead of that restoration of monarchy which the legislature seemed to contemplate by ordering a plan for the Dauphin's education. Increasing in audacity in proportion as the senate shewed signs of trepidation, the intruders boldly intermingled with the members, took part in deliberation, and raised fresh demands as soon as the former were conceded. On these occasions, reason was strangely commingled with ridicule. One day the people required that all classes should be invested with electoral privileges; on another, that females should be endowed with political rights;* and both propositions were received without either a murmur of dissent or a smile of derision. Robespierre, at the hall of the Jacobins, secretly fanned their fury; Danton undisguisedly inflamed it in the commune; and by the influence of these powerful bodies, innovations were daily made, which, under pretence of protecting public liberty, completely abrogated personal freedom. The late police was disbanded by the municipality, as insufficient, or indisposed to their cause, and replaced by another still more odious; the citizens being entrusted with the privilege of denouncing, as well as the duty of watching each other. Democratic as this institution appeared in principle, it was in action most despotic. Under the pretext of providing for the general safety, rigid inquisitions were instituted into private habits; and by an invitation to denounce suspected enemies of the commonwealth, full scope was afforded to the indulgence of individual malice; as all who wished to gratify revenge by the ruin of their own foes, had only to

* Thiers, iii. 12.

proclaim them those of the state; and men were thus arraigned for treasonable crimes who could be accused of no other. This new force was empowered to arrest, disarm, or disperse individuals at pleasure. Denunciation merely was necessary; and examination, with in most instances, condemnation, immediately followed. Such were the general powers of the body; and each town with more than twenty thousand inhabitants was permitted to superadd individual regulations. In Paris, Marat and his associates were invested with the control of this formidable engine, and they set it in motion with fearful activity: a sub-committee was appointed for every section of the capital; to prevent any chance of escape from its fury, none were allowed to leave the city without being attended to the barrier by two witnesses of identity; to increase the number of the victims, every citizen was invited to denounce those concerned in resisting the recent rebellion: and the provincial authorities proceeded with energy still more terrible.*

46. The attitude of a municipality invested with such power soon became so bold, and its authority so great, that the jealousy of the legislature was aroused; and the assembly attempted to destroy its rival by decreeing that the new authorities, who had thrust themselves into office on the night of the insurrection, should be re-elected: but the latter successfully resisted the effort, by enjoining the citizens to supersede the election; and the chamber was glad to compromise the struggle by a partial recognition; though its concession only increased the arrogance of the civic body, and led to still greater assumptions. The assembly had on the 11th of August issued a commission for the trial of the Swiss; but the com-

Revol-
utionary
Tribunal
instituted.

* Thiers, iii. 19, 21; Mignet, i. 314.

CHAP. mune, distrusting the languid forms or benignant
III. frame of the court, demanded another which should

1792. more surely and rapidly immolate the victims ; and the senate having refused to comply, a deputation was despatched under Robespierre, who, in a speech teeming with insult, called for a tribunal to investigate not only the alleged crimes on the 10th of August, but all those committed by the royalists before. The sections supported his demand, and the suburb of St. Antoine, the most democratic in the capital, threatened to sound the tocsin and march against the chamber in the event of refusal. The senate attempted to resist, and stigmatized the desired tribunal as despotic ; but on a repetition of the demand, and preparation to execute the threat, it eventually yielded to the menaces of a savage multitude without, and the instigations of a not less san-

Aug. 17th. guinary minority within. A court, armed with plenary power and exempt from either control or appeal,* was accordingly instituted to punish the royalists engaged in the late insurrections ; and formed the first of those dread revolutionary tribunals which struck the oppressed and spared the oppressor, destroyed the innocent and shielded the guilty, deprived France of the sympathy, and provoked the hostility, of freemen ; filled Europe with dismay, and deluged the universe in blood.

**Retire-
ment of
Lafayette.**

47. A new impulse was communicated to the authorities in the capital by the arrival of disastrous intelligence from the army. Three of the commissioners despatched by the assembly had been arrested by Lafayette, who, still adhering to constitutional principles, refused to acknowledge their power, and threatened to march with his troops

* Lacretelle, ix. 272.

against the newly instituted government: but Dumas having given in his adhesion to its cause, and been appointed commander-in-chief, Lafayette found his own safety endangered, not only by the approach of new commissioners who had been sent to arrest him as a traitor, but also by the hostile disposition of the army, which refused to concur in his designs; was compelled to throw up his command, and conclude his career by seeking shelter from the Austrians, who, contrary to all the laws of war and dictates of honour, treated as a prisoner and confined him for years in a dungeon; safer, however, and happier perhaps than if he had succeeded in his object; and this pure but pragmatic, weak yet high-minded man, until another revolution, where he shewed like incompetence and proved another dupe, thus disappears from the page of history.

CHAP.
III.

1792.

48. The new government, however, was more in danger from the advance of the allies, than from the desertion of its general. The Duke of Brunswick had followed up his proclamation by a plan to cross the Rhine, with the Prussians, at Coblenz, march up the left bank of the Moselle, attack the French frontier on its central point, and advance to the capital by Longwy, Verdun, and Chalons; while Clairfayt, with the Austrians, and one body of emigrants, protected his right; and Prince Hohenloe, with the Hessians and another division, manœuvred on his left*. They accordingly invested, and, after a few days' bombardment, captured Longwy; blockaded Thionville, and advanced against Verdun, on obtaining possession of which, the road to Paris lay open to their arms. The French army, meanwhile, retreated behind the Marne, to concentrate its forces

Advance of
the Allies.

Aug. 24.

* Mignet, i. 293.

CHAP.
III.

1792.

for protection of the metropolis; though the effort appeared hopeless in presence of an enemy superior in number, and still more surpassing in equipment. But what the resistance of the French might have failed to avert, the indolence of the allies effectually prevented. Entering on the war with rashness, they at first pursued it with resolution; but after the capture of Longwy, their zeal unaccountably relaxed. The Austrians moved with the pedantic slowness of German tactics; and though the Prussian king was ardent in Louis's cause, his general, the Duke of Brunswick, daily awoke to the danger of marching through a country whose inhabitants, instead of welcoming his aid, as he had been taught to anticipate, seemed disposed to render every day a day of battle. Events in the republican capital, meanwhile, augmented their indecision; and before the allies recovered resolution, they found a whole nation in arms.

Events in
Paris.

49. The intelligence of Longwy's fall produced momentary consternation in Paris; but soon roused the revolutionists to fury, and accelerated the fate of the royalists, of whom the republicans were, or affected to be, more apprehensive than of the approaching enemy. Part of the assembly proposed retiring to Saumur; but on the motion of Danton, who justly considered that if the metropolis were abandoned, the revolution must perish, the majority determined to remain and meet the enemy under its walls. "The first requisite in a revolution" said the bold democrat, "is audacity, the second is audacity, the third is still audacity;"* and his words inspired all with a similar spirit. A levy of 30,000 troops was immediately imposed upon the capital, and while

* Mignet, i. 324; Thiers, iii. 61.

the men flocked to their standards to supply the number, the women hastened to the churches to prepare the equipments. These measures of defence had scarcely been adopted, when preparations were made for the destruction of the royalists, by the realization of what had hitherto existed only as a dream in the phrenzied mind of Marat. The forms of even the new revolutionary tribunal being too slow for vengeance, the infuriated multitude demanded the surrender of the victims of their rage; and though the majority of the assembly, with the whole of the ministry but Danton, were inclined to mercy, the minority, by the aid of the Jacobins, secured the sacrifice. To congregate their foes, it was resolved, on the motion of the fierce minister of justice, that during forty-eight hours Paris should be isolated, by a closure of the barriers on the land, and an embargo on the river; that in the interval, the city should be nocturnally illuminated, and the inhabitants remain in their domiciles, each of which should be entered by an armed force, and all subjects of suspicion arrested. The capital was accordingly shut up, and from the 29th till the 31st of August, presented a strange scene of desolation by day, and more dismal splendour by night. A period which is but a moment in the life of a man, appeared an age in the existence of a nation. Bands of trusty Jacobins, meanwhile, traversed every street, and searched every house where either royalist, priest, or aristocrat remained concealed; and several thousands were thrown into prison before the inquisition terminated.

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Arrest of
the Royal-
ists.

50. The victims having been congregated, and the minds of the populace inflamed by daily speeches from the city demagogues, the acquittal of an ex-

The Sep-
tembral
Massacres.

CHAP. minister,* or the confession of an executed royalist,†
 III. was the signal for the commencement of the slaughter.

1792. On Sunday, the 2nd of September, while the citizens were assembled at one extremity of Paris, by the sound of the tocsin, and a premature report of Verdun's fall, a band of 200 assassins, under the direction of Maillard, began the immolation at another. Twenty-four priests passing in a vehicle to the prison of Abbaye, first encountered their fury; and, with one exception, were slaughtered amid the imprecations of the multitude. Two hundred others, who had sought shelter in a Carmelite church, became the next objects of vengeance; and were all, with the Archbishop of Arles at their head, either sabred within the walls, or shot in the adjoining garden and trees, to which they fled in vain expectation of refuge. Exhausted by their homicidal labour, the murderers repaired to a district of the municipality, and their demands for wine having been satisfied by the trembling authorities, they proceeded to the prisons with renewed force and ferocity. The unfortunate inmates, who had been dined two hours earlier than usual, and studiously deprived of their knives and forks, as well as of all weapons of defence,‡ implored, but vainly implored, for mercy. A scene of promiscuous slaughter ensued, interrupted only by the institution of a tribunal which sacrificed its victims with equal rapidity. The ceremony of a trial was proposed by one of the assassins; and the leader of the band, with a few of his associates as a jury, and the jail-books as accusers, were immediately installed in the porter's lodge as a court; while the rest remained outside in the yard to execute the sentence. At the bar of this tribunal, slight

* Thiers, iii. 45.

† Histoire Parlementaire, xvii. 409.

‡ Thiers, iii. 62.

suspicion served as evidence of guilt; a few questions were asked, a signal was given by the president, the prisoner was conducted to the door, his executioners raised their knives, and in another moment the wretched being was no more. The soldiers of the Swiss Guard were its earliest victims. "You assassinated the people on the 10th of August," was the brief accusation; "We were attacked and only obeyed our officers," the equally short rejoinder. "Enough," said Maillard, "conduct them to *La Force*;" and the devoted men were immediately consigned to the infuriated multitude without. Montmorin, the ex-minister, whose acquittal had contributed to excite the massacre, was murdered next. "You must go to *La Force*" (the name of another prison), exclaimed the ferocious president; "Be it so," was the reply; and requesting the indulgence of a coach, the deluded prisoner left the room amidst the savage laughter of his judges, and was immediately assassinated below. The whole day and night were spent in atrocities which humanity shrinks from contemplating, and history shudders to record. The murderers relented only when wearied with slaughter; and the few prisoners who escaped, owed their safety either to brutal caprice, or to conditions still more revolting. Sombreuil, an aged officer, and late governor of the Invalids, was saved by the devotion of his daughter, who consented to drink a cup of human blood as the price of his delivery.*

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51. Such were the deeds in the prison of Abbaye; and in the various other jails of the capital, similar barbarities were practiced. At the Bicetre the massacre was still more terrible and protracted;

Murder
of the
Princess of
Lamballe.

* Montgaillard, iii., 205.

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many of the murderers, during several days, quitted and returned to their disgusting employment, as if to their daily avocations, while others, without suspending butchery, received food from their wives, who merely remarked that their husbands were at work in the Abbey.* Several thousand† wretched beings were thus destroyed; and artillery was at last employed to cut them down when the prisoners attempted defence, or the assassins were exhausted by slaughter. The young and the old, the high and the low, the sane and the senseless, were exterminated alike. In such a mass of calamity individual sufferings are forgotten; but one painful instance is deserving of perpetual record. In the fortress of La Force the beautiful princess of Lamballe, who had relinquished safety in a foreign land to console her royal mistress in misfortune, was enrolled amongst the victims. Devotion to Antoinette was the least of her merits, and her only crime. "Swear" said one of the ferocious judges, "to love liberty and equality, and to hate the king, the queen, and royalty."‡ One half of the injunction the unfortunate lady readily swore to obey, but a long attachment to the royal family made her shrink from the other. She was immediately murdered, and mutilated with inhuman cruelty. Her severed limbs and eviscerated heart were dragged through the capital with savage brutality by one-half of the assassins; while her head, elevated on a pike, was borne aloft to the Temple by another, to be paraded before the hapless captives, to whom she, in life and in death, had proved so devoted.

Conduct
of the As-
sembly and
Commune.

52. During the perpetration of these dreadful deeds, the authorities remained in a state of inaction. The

* Thiers, iii. 79.

† Ibid. iii. 84.

‡ Lacretelle, xi. 336.

assembly was for some time in ignorance, and on receiving intelligence of the slaughter, despatched commissioners to the scene; but these were unable to restrain the fury of the assassins. The Jacobin club, though aware of the carnage, preserved an ominous silence;* and the commune of Paris shewed a disposition to encourage, rather than restrain the homicide. The municipality recommended mercy when no more victims remained; but its committee of surveillance, consisting of Marat and a few of his disciples, openly justified the deed; and published an atrocious address, in which they represented the massacre of the royalists as indispensable to the safety of the republicans. Billaud Varrennes, a profligate demagogue, who had emerged from degradation in a theatre to eminence on the civic stage, even proposed that the murderers should be paid for their service to the state, and concluded a sanguinary speech by inviting these "saviours of their country" to attend him to the authorities, and demand remuneration. Roland, the minister, to whom they first repaired, indignantly refused the demand; but the bloody tribute was extorted from the degraded municipality; and the civic register of Paris still records the appropriation of 1463 livres to the assassins of September.†

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53. The massacres were not confined to the capital; the committee of surveillance having followed up its sanguinary proclamation, by sending emissaries to the provinces, to justify the executions as well as recommend their imitation; and on finding its agents and admonitions repulsed by general indignation, despatched a band of murderers from Paris to renew their carnage in the country. In most

Provincial
Massacres.

* Thiers, iii. 85.

† Histoire Parlementaire, xviii. 231.

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places, however, the virtuous resistance of the people prevented a repetition of the slaughter ; and excepting in Orleans and Versailles, where the prisoners confined on charges of high treason were massacred by these wretches, few crimes occurred to stain the page of history. But in these towns, as in Paris, the jails were subjected to the same horrible delivery, and fast as they were cleared by murder, were again crowded by proscription. Avarice and revenge, the most powerful of human passions, enjoyed unbridled sway ; and while there existed wealth to be sequestered, or vengeance to be satiated, there was no diminution in the number of offenders.

Hostilities.

54. But while the government was thus paralyzed by a small domestic faction, it successfully contended with a powerful foreign foe. Since the fall of Longwy 2000 men had been daily despatched to the army ; and though destitute of discipline, and almost of arms,* they were formidable from that enthusiastic spirit which, often indiscreet in peace, is generally omnipotent in war. The first of these necessary elements of war was soon imparted by the energy of their commander, Dumouriez ; the exertions of Servan, the war minister, daily augmented the second ; and the last was increased by the unexpected indolence of the enemy, who, after the capture of Verdun, remained several days in a state of inaction, instead of prosecuting a march to Paris, which might have proved fatal to the feeble government, and possibly also to freedom. Dumouriez was thus enabled to occupy the forest of Argonne, through which the allies must necessarily pass, in order to avoid interruption from the French forces on the one side, and the Belgian fortresses on the other.

Sept. 2nd.

* Jomini ; *Histoire des Guerres de la Revolution*, ii. 2 ; Paris 1824.

This forest was forty miles in extent ; and as it could be traversed only by five narrow defiles, admitted of being readily rendered impassable. Dumouriez accordingly, rejecting the opinion of a council of war, who advised a retreat to Chalons, expressed his determination to render the ground a new Thermopylæ,* and soon converted the principal passes into positions impregnable. But the foresight of this modern Leonidas equalled not his resolution : while fortifying the chief roads, he neglected lesser routes, and had scarcely taken possession of his unassailable camp, ere he found himself surrounded by 40,000 Prussians in front, and half the number of Austrians in rear.† Forming a new decision, with the rapidity of genius, he suddenly abandoned his position ; and by a masterly nocturnal retreat, escaped from the dangerous situation ; but the allies were now between him and Paris, with no apparent obstacle to impede their progress. The same inexplicable hesitation, however, again saved the metropolis, and hastened the fall of the monarch. During several days the hostile armies remained silent spectators of each other ; and when they at length resumed activity, a partial engagement at Valmy, which led to no result beyond the loss of a thousand men, and an immense expenditure of ammunition on each side, left them in the same position as before. Negotiations between the belligerents soon explained the mystery, and indicated that treachery existed on the one side, or timidity on the other. A truce was proposed by the French general, and though at first rejected by the Prussian king, it was eventually accepted by the Duke of Brunswick, the commander of the coalition. Scarcity, with its concomitant,

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Cannonade
at Valmy,
20th Sept.and
Retreat of
the Allies,
1st Oct.

* Dumouriez ; Memoires, ii. 391.

† Thiers, iii. 101, 102.

CHAP. disease, in the allied camp hastened an arrangement ;
 III. and the invaders shortly afterwards retreated from

1792. the French territory, surrendering Longwy and Verdun to the republicans, and abandoning the royal family to its fate. This unexpected result of the campaign excited equal suspicion and surprise. Dissensions between the French generals, and a dysentery in the Prussian ranks, were the causes ostensibly assigned ; but these failed to satisfy the public mind ; and the uninterrupted retreat of the enemy can be explained only by the existence of a secret compact between Dumouriez, on behalf of Louis, and Brunswick on the part of the allies. Such a treaty was now surmised ;* and the disappearance of the French regalia supported, while studied obscurity has strengthened, a suspicion calculated to raise alike contemporaneous and future reprobation. It drew upon all participators immediate reproach, and eventual ruin ; excited the indignation of the republicans, and accelerated the death of the king ; caused Dumouriez to expiate his error in exile, and Brunswick to atone for his avarice by a glorious death ; cost England millions of her treasure, and Europe torrents of her blood ; but enabled the world to witness a man whom the last generations of his species will admire.

Result
 of the
 Campaign.

55. In other quarters the French arms were crowned by success more unequivocal. The Duke of Saxe Teschen failed in an attack on the Netherlands, and after a fierce bombardment of several days, was forced, by the bravery of the inhabitants, and the approach of the French, to raise the siege of Lille. In a design against the Palatinate, Custine, a rash but intrepid republican officer, was un-

* Toulangeon, ii. 347 ; Jomini, iii. 140.

expectedly fortunate. Having been detached with a division of 17,000 men from the army of Biron, he entered Worms, obliged the garrison to surrender, and subsequently obtained possession of Mentz, either by stratagem or the connivance of the citizens ; but imprudently advancing to Frankfort, a neutral city, easy to seize, but difficult to occupy, he exposed himself to be cut off by the retreating Prussians, and irritated the inhabitants by rapacious exactions.* The conduct of Anselme, an energetic soldier of fortune, whom Dumouriez had dispatched with a division of his army, was equally successful in the beginning, and reprehensible in the end. Passing the impetuous stream of the Var, he seized Nice ; and by the co-operation of a naval squadron under Truguet, captured Villefranche, the greater part of whose inhabitants he destroyed for resisting, or resenting his summons to surrender.† Dumouriez himself, leaving Kellermann, a brave but vain and incompetent Alsatian, to pursue the Austrians, advanced upon Chambray, to realize his project of a Rhenish frontier ; and after laying the foundation of an union between France and Savoy, whose manners and language were identical, he left his army for a few days, and repaired to Paris, to seek the congratulations of his country on the result of a campaign which, if unattended by any brilliant victories on the part of the French, had been prosecuted by their opponents without any honourable gain, and terminated without a vestige of glory.

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56. Such was the state of France in the autumn of 1792, when the feeble legislative assembly terminated its career, a victim to the populace from which it sprang. The country was secure from foreign aggression, but distracted by domestic fac-

Dissolution
of the
Assembly,
and State
of France.

* Jomini, ii. 149-160.

† Thiers, iii. 189.

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tion. The capital now ruled the kingdom, and democracy there reigned unbridled. Power had gradually descended from the highest orders to the lowest. Concentrated in the middling classes by the insurrection of the 14th of July, it was established in the multitude by that on the 10th of August,* and remained in their hands until seized by the grasp of dictators. The sovereign was confined in the Temple, stripped of every vestige of power, and a prisoner in the hands of menacing subjects. His ancient nobility and antiquated priesthood, were either dispersed or destroyed. As branches of the regal tree, they had participated in its fall: when the stem was severed, the foliage perished too.

* Mignet, i. 312

CHAPTER IV.

THE CONVENTION,
TILL THE DEATH OF LOUIS XVI.

1. Meeting of the Convention.—2. Parties in.—3. Its First Acts; Equality Proclaimed; Royalty Abolished; and the Calendar Changed.—4. Acts of the Girondists; Committee of Nine; and Legislative Guard Appointed.—5. Decree against the Commune of Paris.—6. Denunciation of Danton, Robespierre, and Marat.—7. Impeachment of Robespierre.—8. Preparations of the Jacobins for his Defence.—9. Trial, Defence, and Acquittal of Robespierre.—10. Triumph of the Jacobins.—11. Military affairs; Character and Conduct of Pache, the new War Minister.—12. Battle of Jemappes.—13. Fruits of the Victory.—14. Other Successes; end of the Campaign; Convention's Decree of General Hostility.—15. Scarcity and its consequences; Origin of Civil War.—16. Position of the King and Royal Family; Demands for Louis's Trial; Speech of Robespierre.—17. Preparations for the King's Trial; Arguments for and against it.—18. The Day of Trial.—19. Louis's Appearance at the Bar: First Day's Proceedings; the Indictment.—20. The King's Counsel.—21. Second Day of Trial; the Defence; Desèze's Peroration.—22. Louis's Speech.—23. Scene on his Retirement.—24. Debate on the Verdict; Speech of St. Just; Proposition of Salles; Demands of Robespierre; Conduct of the Girondists; Vergniaud's Speech.—25. The Verdict.—26. The Sentence.—27. Conduct of the King; his Family Adieu.—28. State of Paris; Murder of Lepelletier.—29. Execution of Louis XVI.—30. His Character and Conduct.

1. On the 21st of September, 1792, the legislative assembly was dissolved, the Convention having on the previous day arisen on its fall. The new legislature consisted of the leading members of the chambers preceding, and the fierce democrats, lately so conspicuous in Paris; but the latter as yet formed a small minority, the reaction which the recent massacres had excited, having caused the provinces to return deputies hostile to the terrorists. The moderate republicans had also been strengthened by new accessions to their ranks; several of those who participated in the earlier insurrections having joined the Girondists,

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1792-1793.

The Con-
vention.

CHAP. including Petion, the mayor, who, until the recent
IV. murders, had sympathized in the most revolutionary

1792. acts of the Jacobins. He was in consequence elected president of the Convention ; and the simultaneous appointment of Brissot, Vergniaud, Condorcet, and other eminent members of that intellectual party, as secretaries of the chamber, evinced the strength of the Girondists, and their momentary determination to display energy equal with their mental power. Most of the provincial deputies, and all for whom intellect had charms, attached themselves to this body, which still contained whatever was elevated in eloquence, or lofty in principle, yet remaining in France. In the opposite party were numbered Robespierre, Danton, and Marat, and those who either had secretly instigated, or openly abetted the sanguinary deeds of September. Their followers consisted chiefly of the lowest democrats of Paris ; and with the exception of David, a celebrated painter, and Egalité, Duke of Orleans, they possessed no adherent either eminent in art, or illustrious in rank. But the party was formidable from the support of the Jacobin club and brigands of the capital, who were ready to realize the most revolutionary projects of their leaders, and these were determined to maintain their power by the violence through which it was acquired.

Parties in. 2. The different divisions of the Convention retained the same distinctive names and positions by which they were distinguished in the last assembly ; the Girondists occupying the right side of the hall, by that designation ; and their adversaries, the Jacobins, under the name of " The Mountain," frowning from the higher benches of the left ; while the intermediate space or plain, in the centre of the chamber, was filled by a large body who were attached to no party,

but in the first instance voted with the Girondists, and thus gave them a majority decisive. The Duke of Orleans, who, for the insane designation of Philip Equality, had abandoned an ancestral name, illustrious till he bore it, now joined, and eventually became conspicuous amid this ignoble vacillating race.

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3. The republican disposition of the chamber was evinced immediately on its meeting, by the reception of a motion to allot the palace of the Tuilleries as a residence for the president. Though Manuel, the procureur-syndic, by whom it was proposed, had hitherto been an ardent revolutionist, it was rejected as an infringement of that equality which should henceforth prevail, and which was next day established by a formal declaration that all classes of the citizens were alike in the estimation of the state. With the concurrence of every party, royalty was at the same time solemnly abolished; and the year which, since the outbreak of the revolution in 1789, had been computed as the fourth of liberty, was ordered to be dated or commenced from the 22nd of September, 1792, in commemoration of the deeds of this eventful day, when all ranks of the people were pronounced equal in the eye of their country, and eligible, alike, to every office in her service.*

Its first
Acts.

Equality
Proclaimed

Royalty
Abolished.

Calendar
Changed.

4. But the elements of which the Convention consisted, were too discordant for the existence of harmony. One party, the royalists, having been subdued, their conquerors yielded to the natural law of parties, and became divided in turn. The Girondists and Jacobins, by whose union the throne was subverted, had no sooner accomplished their design than they turned their arms against each other, and panted with mutual exasperation for a collision, which quickly

Acts of the
Girondists.

* Thiers, iii. 148-150; Lacretelle, x. 11, 10.

CHAP. proved fatal to one, and eventually destructive to both.
 IV. A spark only was required to explode bodies so com-
 bustible, and each longed alike for its approach ; the
 1792. former confiding in their eloquence and the justice of
 their cause, the latter trusting to the support and
 power of the people. When parties are so inflamed,
 conflagration soon supervenes, and a cause for quarrel
 is easily found when combatants are equally eager
 for contest. A proposal by Buzot, a Girondist, for
 inquiry into the recent massacres, was hailed by both
 as a signal for the commencement of the strife.
 Recapitulating, in vivid language, the deeds of those
 days, and denouncing with indignation, still more
 glowing, the instigations made for their renewal, he
 proposed the establishment of a committee to inquire
 into the condition of the country, and protect it against
 a repetition of the one, as well as to punish the authors
 of the other. He also proposed the formation of a
 Legislative Guard, by contributions of troops from
 each of the 83 departments ; and notwithstanding the
 violent opposition of the Mountain, all his measures
 were supported by a great majority of the chamber,
 which appointed a committee of nine members for
 the consideration of the first, and entrusted Roland,
 the minister of the interior, with the formation of the
 last. The committee so appointed, was also charged
 with the construction of a new constitution, and
 formed the germ of that formidable Committee of
 Public Safety, whose influence afterwards became
 so momentous. Various similar bodies were simul-
 taneously nominated for the administration of war,
 finance, legislation, and police ; in all of which
 the interest of the Girondists originally prevailed,
 especially in the celebrated Committee of Nine, the
 whole of whose members belonged to their party,

Committee
of Nine,

and Legis-
lative
Guard
Appointed.

excepting Danton of the Mountain, Barrere, a profligate and vacillating noble, who sought shelter in the doubtful position of the Plain, and the expatriated Englishman, Thomas Paine, whom persecution elevated to this rank in a country which had for centuries been in almost perpetual hostility with his own.*

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5. This success at the outset encouraged the Girondists to follow up their advantage with more precipitation than prudence, and eventually led to the triumph of their foes. These in the meantime did not submit in silence to the blow; but raised a fierce storm against their opponents, whom they accused of a design to destroy the country, by establishing a confederation of independent states, whose mutual jealousies could scarcely fail to impair its resources, by increasing its dissensions; and they attacked the convention itself through the instrumentality of the Jacobin club, as well as the still formidable commune of Paris. Against the first of these irresponsible powers, which by means of innumerable affiliations overawed the whole republic, the legislature was not yet in condition to raise an arm; but the full force of its wrath was launched upon the other, whose recent proscriptions, rapine, and participation in the scenes of September, had in great measure deprived it of popular support. By one decree of the Convention the members of the municipality were ordered to be re-elected, and by another its surviving prisoners were restored to freedom. But the body which so recently outraged all the laws of humanity, did not quiescently succumb to the dictates of the senate. Boldly retorting on the hand that menaced it, the commune accused several members of the late assemblies, and deputies in the present, of yielding to

Decree
against the
Committee
of Paris.

* Moniteur; Seance du 24 Sept. 1792.

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1792.

the corruption of the court ; an accusation which, though probably founded in truth, was, on investigation by a committee of the Convention, pronounced unfounded, and declared to be infamous. The commune still persisted ; but, undeterred by its threats and the hostility of the Jacobins, the legislature proceeded to repress it with an energy rarely afterwards displayed, and unqualified submission alone averted its suppression.

Denuncia-
tion of
Danton,
Robes-
pierre and
Marat.

6. The efforts of the enlightened republicans to crush the formidable triumvirate composed of Danton, Robespierre, and Marat, were attended with a different result. Between the Girondists and this formidable body, whose existence was already surmised, though not yet acknowledged, mutual hatred and fear had been displayed in the first days of the Convention ; and the avowed animosity of the one was equalled only by the daring defiance of the other. Threats had been daily muttered, and insinuations hourly broached, but each side shrank from more decisive hostilities. An unequivocal denunciation of the cabal by a leading member of the former eventually roused the indignation of Danton, who had lately sacrificed the profit of office for the prospect of ambition, by renouncing his place in the ministry when it was declared incompatible with a seat in the Convention ; and burning with fury, or fired by disappointment, he disclaimed the connexion, but defended his associates with a fervour which left little doubt of its existence. Yet as the time had not arrived for proclaiming their union, he disavowed and concurred in a motion against it ; but at the same time retorted upon his adversaries by proposing a decree against the establishment of that confederation which the Girondists were supposed to contemplate,

and thus dexterously involved them in the snare they had designed for himself. Robespierre hastened to support the motion, and concluded an egotistical but insidious oration by recriminating on his foes, and demanding its adoption. The appearance of Marat, who succeeded him, was still more menacing. This savage enthusiast had hitherto shrunk from the public gaze, and passed his life in obscure haunts, congenial with his cynical temper and the dismal broodings of his mind. He now for the first time rose in the Convention, and his hideous aspect increased the disgust of all who had previously recoiled from the sanguinary effusions of his pen. For some time he in vain essayed to address the chamber amid the shouts of abhorrence which assailed him from every side, except his own position in the Mountain ; but his inflexible resolution, and that sense of justice which dictates that the most debased shall not be unheard, at last prevailed ; and amid the suppressed indignation of his audience he avowed his desire for a dictatorship ; denounced the royal family as the origin of the public calamity ; and his sanguinary imagination kindling in the silent horror with which its emanations were received, declared that if five hundred heads had fallen at his command on the Bastile's capture, the subsequent sacrifice of a hundred thousand, which he now recommended, would have been superseded. Emboldened by the continued silence of his audience, which originated from amazement, but was by him assigned to assent, he next appealed to their sympathy by a profession of that disinterest which rarely fails to excite generous emotions in the human breast, however hardened be the heart to the cries of distress. Having thus produced a revulsion less hostile, he concluded his audacious address with

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out any signs of applause, but amid no marks of indignation; and before descending from the tribune, testified his contempt for the attack, by presenting a pistol at his forehead, and declaring that were imprisonment attempted, his own hand should render him free. Another accusation was immediately afterwards brought against him for an atrocious incitement to insurrection and murder, which he had published in his journal on the morning of this day; but though it drew on his head a storm of reprobation, he again escaped uninjured, and after once more defying the vengeance of the chamber left the bar with a smile of malignant triumph on his lips, which rendered his repulsive visage still more revolting.*

Impeach-
ment of
Robes-
pierre.

7. The assault on the collective triumvirate thus failed; and a premature accusation of Robespierre, individually, was a source of still greater triumph to his friends and misfortune to his enemies. Louvet, an able, ardent, but rash and impetuous Girondist—whose licentious work † will probably commemorate his name when his eloquence in the senate, and sufferings in the forest, shall be buried in oblivion,—was the accuser; and Robespierre's opposition to Roland's Report on the Condition of Paris was hailed by him as an opportunity for the ebullition of that hatred which had long slumbered in his heart. The secret cabals of the triumvirate having been stigmatized in this document with equal ability and indignation, Robespierre opposed its publication, declared it a defamatory falsehood, and demanded evidence of his guilt. His opposition in part succeeded; the report was ordered to be printed, yet its distribution throughout the country was withheld: but his challenge "Who accuses

* *Moniteur*; *Seance du 25 Sept. 1792*; Thiers, iii. 155-172.

† Faublas.

me?" was eagerly seized by the headlong Louvet, who rushing to the bar, in a torrent of eloquence to which the chamber listened with favour and Robespierre with fear, exclaimed "I accuse thee of calumniating and causing the purest citizens to be proscribed; I accuse thee of aspiring to dictatorship, and of vilifying and persecuting the nation's representatives; I accuse thee of tyranny in the electoral assembly of Paris, and of marching to despotism by violence and terror: and I demand a committee for the investigation of your share in crimes worse even than those of Marat"—"Gods!" he cried, "I have named him."* The cheers of the audience, excited by the orator's glowing denunciation, and the terror which Robespierre displayed in his cadaverous face and faltering accents, would probably have caused him to fall an easy victim if the tribunal had then been appointed; but on his entreaty, the inquiry was postponed until the 5th of November, and this delay was fatal to the success of the impeachment.

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1792.

8. In the interval all the energy of the Jacobins was devoted to the protection of their leader. The club was daily in a state of fierce commotion, and the accusers were denounced with such savage imprecations that his acquittal by the terrified Convention already was secure. Robespierre himself avoided their hall, and remained secluded from public view, sedulously engaged in preparing his defence; but his younger brother repaired to it on the eve of impeachment, and, imitating the aspect of woe which the friends of parties arraigned were wont to assume in ancient Rome, deplored he was not simultaneously calumniated; bewailed that such innocence

Jacobin
prepara-
tions for
his defence.

* Mignet, i. 356, 359.

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was about to suffer ; complimented the enlightened citizens of Paris as alone capable of appreciating the virtue of the accused, and lamented that in the minds of the ignorant provincial population prejudices should exist against it. He concluded a ludicrously lachrymose oration with a fabulous detail of the intended assassination of his brother, intended still more to excite the sympathy of his audience ; and Chabot, the furious president of the club, followed in a bolder strain, exchanging abject entreaty for ominous menace. The speakers who succeeded were still more ferocious. One member openly avowed his participation in the recent massacres, and others surrounding the younger Robespierre, swore to save his brother by the shield of their protection, and threatened to renew the scenes of September before he should fall.*

Robes-
pierre's
trial,

9. The eventful day of trial at last arrived, ushered in by a still more tumultuous meeting of the Jacobins, when the partisans of Robespierre repeated their fierce vows of protection, and his brother renewed the ludicrous exhibition of Roman woe. Bands of savage adherents paraded the streets, uttering violent imprecations, and denouncing Roland or Robespierre, according to the side they respectively espoused. In the hall of the Convention the concourse was great ; and the members, whether Jacobins or Girondists, with equal impatience awaited the result of a contest pregnant with triumph to the one and dismay to the other. The accuser reiterated the accusation, but with little of his former fire, and sustained it by no corroborating proof. "What evidence," said Robespierre, calmly in reply, "has the citizen Louvet to offer in support of his assertions ?"—and finding

Defence,

none, he confidently delivered a long insidious defence, abounding with the egotistical complacency and vague declamation by which his orations were invariably distinguished. He disclaimed all ambitious motives; denied the various imputations which had been adduced against him prematurely, though undoubtedly founded in truth; and when his apparently earnest sincerity and profuse professions of patriotism rendered some favourable impression visible on the minds of his audience, he dexterously seized the opportunity, and, resorting to those revolutionary appeals and allusions to ancient freedom of which the feelings of the chamber were peculiarly susceptible, he excited the passions of his own party, bewildered the minds of neutral members, astounded his opponents, and finally descended from the tribune amidst the acclamations of the Mountain, the irresolute but unsuppressed applause of the Plain, and the silent indignation of the Girondists, whose doom his victory had sealed. The vast majority of undecided deputies having thus evidently united with his own resolute adherents, his opponents shrank from bringing their accusation to an issue; the Convention virtually acquitted him by passing to the order of the day; and he returned in triumph to the hall of the Jacobins, to brood measures of revenge against a party with whom compromise was now wholly renounced, and to pursue them with malice unquenched and unquenchable.*

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and Ac-
quittal.

10. The acquittal of Robespierre produced between the Jacobins and the Convention a reconciliation which the latter hastened to confirm by yielding to the popular demands. In compliance with these, the legislature rejected a proposition by the Girondist,

Triumph
of the
Jacobins.

* Moniteur; Seance du 5 Nov. 1792; Lacretelle, x. 71, 80.

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Barbareux, to remove the seat of government to the south in the event of violence in the capital; abolished the decree for providing it with a provincial guard; and refused either to constitute itself into a court for the trial of the Septembral conspirators, or to annul the authority of the again uprising municipality of Paris. The acts which Buzot had previously obtained were also repealed; and his party was thus not only deprived of its influence in the Committee of Nine, but exposed to the retorts of the Jacobins in turn. A covert attack was in the first instance made by a decree for the unity and indivisibility of the republic, which insidiously involved the Girondists in obloquy, and annihilated their cherished but impolitic design to establish a confederation of independent states. In proportion as the senate succumbed, the star and demands of democracy arose; and his unhappy opponents had the mortification of discovering that Robespierre had been rendered a dictator by their representations, that the Jacobins assumed him as a chief because as such he had been persecuted, that the Mountain had been attacked without being weakened, and the commune assailed without being subdued.*

Military
Affairs.

11. The approaching disorganization of civil government was already displayed in the military, which, in periods of revolution, generally assumes precedence in disorder. Servan, the effective minister of war, had exchanged the cares of office for the command of an army of observation in the Pyrenees, and been succeeded by Pache, a Swiss of obscure origin, who concealed cunning and hypocrisy under the mask of simplicity, and incapacity as well as ambition under an aspect of republican devotion. Calm, zealous,

Character
of Pache.

* Mignet, i. 360, 363.

undoubtedly indefatigable, and apparently unassuming, he ostentatiously repaired to his office with a crust of bread,* on which he sustained the protracted labour of the day; but feeble, irresolute, and destitute of energy, he busied himself with petty details, and abandoned important duties to the control of subalterns, who readily swayed and abused a disposition so ductile and unduly deferential to all, especially to the Jacobins, whose abject tool he speedily became. Dumouriez, after a few days' sojourn in Paris, whither he had repaired in expectation of aggrandizing himself and saving the king, having been received with doubtful cordiality by the Girondists, and open insult by Marat on the part of the Jacobins,† had, finding his efforts futile, left the capital in disgust; and, in hopes of retrieving his reputation by victory, returned to an army wholly destitute of the equipments necessary for a winter campaign. He in vain demanded supplies from the new minister of war; Pache, how desirous soever of granting them, was secretly thwarted by the Jacobins, who already directed all the movements of his office, and counteracted the designs of the general. The reinforcements thus, if nominally transmitted, rarely reached their destination; and while Dumouriez deservedly reproached the minister and the committee to whom the duty of supplying the army was entrusted, the publication of Pache's plausible despatches subjected the commander to an imputation of discontent, though his complaints were substantiated by justice and founded in truth.

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12. Notwithstanding these obstacles, Dumouriez

Battle of
Jemappes,
Nov. 6th.

* Thiers, iii. 237.

† Marat had repaired to an entertainment given to Dumouriez, and insolently demanded an explanation of his military conduct, which the other as contemptuously refused.

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resolved to advance against the enemy, in the hope of reviving by a brilliant action the sinking spirit which alarming desertions daily evinced in his troops ; but instead of following the course of the Meuse, and preventing Clairfayt's junction with the main body of the Austrians, he determined to attack them in front, and detached Valence with eighteen thousand men to intercept the one, while with forty thousand he in person marched against the other, with whom he came up on the evening of the 5th of November, encamped on the heights in the vicinity of Mons. The position of the Austrians was strong ; on the side of that city, where their main army lay, it was almost impregnable ; and the villages of Jemappes, Cuesmes, and Bethaimont, in the opposite direction, were powerfully fortified by nature and art, and defended by a numerous park of artillery, formidable redoubts, and twenty thousand of Germany's primest troops under the command of Beaulieu, a general of experience, and of Clairfayt, a still abler officer, whom Valence had failed to intercept. Against this formidable force, Dumouriez boldly advanced his army in a semicircular line, the right wing of which, under D'Harville, was entrusted with the duty of outflanking the Austrians, and thus cutting off their retreat ; while Ferrand, with the left, attempted a like manœuvre in the direction of Jemappes, and the centre attacked in front under the command of the Duke of Chartres, whose vicissitudes have since terminated on the throne of that country whose troops he this day bravely led. In this position, the respective armies remained during the night ; each party shrinking from the terror and uncertainty of a nocturnal combat ; but early on the morrow the republicans rushed to the assault along the whole of their line, while

Dumouriez himself remained with a reserve in the rear to decide the result of the engagement. The attack was fiercely made, and as bravely met. The centre of the French evinced symptoms of retreating; but was rallied by the Duke of Chartres, who gallantly renewed the onset, which the Austrians heroically repelled. The situation of the legions on whom freedom relied was now perilous in the extreme; their ranks were thrown into disorder by the German artillery, and notwithstanding the bravery with which Dampierre attempted to renew the attack, a charge of Austrian hussars was on the point of completing their overthrow, when the voice of Dumouriez was heard loud amid the clangour and carnage of battle. Galloping up at the moment when victory was on the eve of deserting his banners, he rallied the republicans, repelled the advancing cavalry by a vigorous discharge of musketry, and brought up his reserve, which had been stationed behind a small stream to await the emergency. Fired by his energy, the troops raised the Marseillaise hymn, and under the impulse of its inspiring strains, charged with irresistible fury. The Germans were, after an obstinate resistance, driven back; and the wings and centre of the French having been equally successful in retrieving the fortune of the day, the Austrian legions, on whom success so lately smiled, were compelled to abandon the well-defended field; but they retired in good order and without interruption; Dumouriez having allowed his exhausted troops an interval of repose, and D'Harville, to whom the pursuit was entrusted, having either from incompetence, or want of due advertence, permitted them to retreat unmolested to Brussels.*

* Dumouriez; *Memoirs*, iii. 169-175; Toulangeon, ii. 48-50.

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Fruits of
the Victory

13. So terminated this celebrated engagement, unimportant in magnitude, though the Austrians lost 1500 prisoners, and nearly 5000 men were killed or wounded on either side ; but of momentous advantage to the republic, by proving that her disorganized levies were able to encounter and overcome the best appointed troops of the Continent. The victory, though not so decisive as it might have been if Dumouriez, able in conceiving, and impetuous in executing his plans, but indolent and injudicious after success was achieved, had ardently pursued the enemy in person, excited equal enthusiasm in France, and astonishment in Europe. In Paris, indeed, Marat, to whom the general was personally odious, attempted to dampen the joy, by representing that Dumouriez, in reporting the fall of only a few hundreds on his side, had greatly diminished the extent of his loss ; and essayed still more to disparage him by the atrocious insinuation that he had placed the metropolitan levies in the van, in order to insure their destruction. But this union of truth and calumny, generally so dangerous and effective, in the present instance failed to cast obloquy on the commander, or to impair the importance of a victory which laid Belgium open to the arms of the French ; though the value of the acquisition was subsequently lost to his country by the dissatisfaction which Dumouriez's exactions engendered, and the fruits of conquest were lost to himself by the arrogance which success so generally inspires.

Other
Successes.

14. Other triumphs, less signal, tended to increase the intoxication of the French. Stenzel, whom Dumouriez detached with his vanguard, on personally taking possession of Brussels, captured Malines and the important magazine it contained. Custine still

retained his position at Frankfort, notwithstanding the rashness with which he had extended his lines. CHAP.
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The neutrality of Switzerland was insured by the operations of Montesquiou, although he was obliged to seek shelter in emigration, on account of his alleged meanness as an envoy. Naples, after a few hours' cannonade, had been compelled to acknowledge the power of the republic; and though Beurnonville, by whom Kellermann, in consequence of his tardy operations, had been superseded, failed in an attack upon Treves, and Dumouriez himself had a doubtful skirmish with the enemy at Vareux, yet the campaign was terminated by his triumphal entrance into Liege, in a manner not less unexpected in Europe, than advantageous to his country. The spirit of the republic was so elevated by this triumphant result, that its rulers, instead of acting merely on the defensive, resolved to assume an attitude of offence. The Convention, accordingly, in a memorable decree, on the 19th of November proclaimed peace to the cottage, and war to the palace, by offering the aid of France to every people desirous of recovering its liberty and rights.* 1792.

End of the
Campaign.

15. But while thus victorious abroad, the republic was deeply distracted at home. The scarcity of supplies was not confined to the army; an equal dearth of the chief element of life existed in the heart of the people. The disquietude of the country had long interfered with the peaceful operations of husbandry, and the famine thus naturally engendered was increased by the conduct of the commune of Paris, who, impelled either by patriotism or by a morbid desire of popularity, still more exhausted the product of the soil by purchasing corn at an exorbitant rate, Conven-
tion's
Decree of
General
Hostilities.

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and its con-
sequences.

* Thiers, iii. 274.

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and reselling it to the populace for a nominal price. By this rash innovation, the supply was soon diminished; and when agriculturists, who in the first instance hurried to the mart, were no longer willing to exchange substantial grain for uncertain currency, the violent revolutionists attempted, by means still more unwarrantable, to arrest the progress of that want which their insatiable thirst for applause originally caused, or eventually aggravated. They proposed that farmers should be compelled, on penalty of death, to bring their produce to market, for sale at a price fixed by the commune; and that it should neither be removed unsold, nor accumulated for the purpose of speculation or exportation. Against a project so destructive to that liberty under which alone commerce can prosper and industry flourish, the moderate republicans protested, but protested in vain. Instead of this futile effort to alleviate the evil by violence, they vainly suggested the expediency of encouraging agriculture by avoiding coercion; and to extend protection by securing freedom in sale, unrestricted, except by competition, and liberty of exportation, subject only to a duty increasing with the augmentation of price. The indigent, who unhappily in every age and clime constitute the great majority of mankind, naturally supported the proposition of the former; and backed by the populace, the Jacobins loudly arraigned the conduct of Roland and the Girondists, who recriminated with equal indignation and greater justice. But in periods of convulsion and the hour of distress the dictates of reason rarely sway the human breast. Famine was urgent; and as remarked by a speculative philosopher (Rousseau) whose writings then exerted a momentous influence on his countrymen,

“The poor will eat the rich when nothing else remains to be eaten.”* The friends of civil government temporarily prevailed; but their triumph raised a storm which accelerated their doom. A deep agitation was produced in the capital, and in the country it contributed with another cause to raise a still more dangerous commotion. In the departments of the west, where royalist feelings and extreme scarcity prevailed, the people, incited partly by famine, and still more by fanaticism or the instigations of their priests, fiercely accused the Convention of causing their calamities and designing to deprive them (strange combination!) of the benefit of bread and the blessing of religion;† demanded the imposition of a fixed price on the one, the extension of unlimited license to the other; and when the senate despatched two of its members to allay the excitement, several thousands of the peasants arose in the neighbourhood of Courville, and forced them to comply with their exactions. On receiving intelligence of this violence, the legislature immediately repealed the authority, and reprimanded the concession of its deputies; but though the chamber simultaneously disclaimed interference with religion, its present decree gave rise to that civil war which so long devastated the fairest provinces of France.

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Origin of
Civil War.

16. The king, imprisoned in the recesses of the Temple, was, along with his adherents, accused of fomenting the public distress. Closely watched by a guard of the municipality of Paris, exposed to that malignity with which the vulgar pursue rank in affliction, and, with the exception of one humble attendant, divested of all their regal retinue, the royal family had, since the 10th of August, been

Position of
the King
and Royal
Family.

* Thiers, v. 405.

† Ibid. iii. 316.

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1792.

Demands
for Louis's
Trial.

confined in separate floors of the edifice, and permitted to respire for only an hour each day the less impure air of its garden ; the long interval being passed by Louis in the education of his son, by the queen in performing the same task of affection to her daughter, and by his sister, who discharged the duties of a menial, in those acts of attention, or that interchange of sympathy, which the prisoners invariably found in the hearts of each other, and sometimes even in the breasts of their gaolers. For several weeks subsequent to its assemblage, the Convention had studiously refrained from allusion to the king ; and the majority seemed inclined to rest satisfied with the triumph which republican principles had obtained in his dethronement : but the minority were more alive to the danger arising from a sovereign who, while imprisoned, formed a rallying point for royalist resistance, and, if enlarged, might become an instrument of royalist resentment. The provincial inhabitants, by whom Louis's misfortunes were viewed in commiseration, concurred with the former in reluctance to pursue a monarch in distress : but their generous compassion only accelerated his fate ; for while they essayed to save him by representing the Jacobins as the source of public disquietude, the latter retorted that it emanated from the Temple, and would be quelled only by the death of the king. The friends of the sovereign, finding public opinion against them in Paris, vainly attempted to direct popular indignation into a new channel by impeaching Marat, who had shewn his contempt for the Girondists by another atrocious publication on the day of his late accusation. The senate sought safety in indecision, and with affected impartiality appointed a committee for the examination of both. The accusa-

tion of Marat was retarded by the influence of the Jacobins, but that of the king proceeded with alacrity, for which the present distress afforded an opportunity dexterously seized by Robespierre. Rising during a tumultuous meeting of the Convention, he said "He had discovered a talisman more powerful than any for the establishment of tranquillity, for restoring harmony to the chamber, overwhelming the enemies of the legislature, imposing silence on libellers, and overturning their calumnies;" and when urged to disclose the nature of his charm, he replied, "It is the condemnation of the French tyrant to the penalty of his crimes. You will thus destroy the rallying point of conspiracy; next day you may pass decrees upon corn, and on the following establish the basis of a free constitution."*

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Speech of
Robes-
pierre.

17. The Convention was still divided on the question of the king's responsibility, a topic which subjects are so apt to assume, and sovereigns to deny. According to an article of the constitution, as established by the constituent assembly, and accepted by the legislative, the monarch's person was sacred; and, as in all limited monarchies, his ministers alone were responsible for administrative acts; but the stern republicans of the present legislature considered the acknowledgment of its predecessors unimperative on it, and that the flight of the king to Varrennes, the conduct and his suspected countenance of the emigrants, and, above all, his secret correspondence with hostile foreign powers, recently discovered in the archives of the Tuilleries, rendered him amenable to the judgment of his people. While such was the opinion entertained and expressed by the Jacobins, the Girondists, though desirous of saving his life,† did

Prepara-
tions for the
King's
Trial.Arguments
forand against
it.

* Moniteur, Seance du 30 Nov. 1792. † Thiers, iii. 320; Mignet, i. 368.

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not venture to advocate that irresponsibility which the constitution established, their own principles avowed, but the populace denied. They attempted to interpose between him and his fate, by representing that the 10th of August had virtually disposed of his person, and the subsequent abrogation of his power had rendered his future existence so innocuous to the nation, that he might either be liberated simply as a citizen, and left as a memorial of the people's clemency ; or be exiled or imprisoned, if his liberty were inconsistent with the republic's safety. His enemies replied, that the person of a king, even though inviolable for the public conduct of his government, ceased to be sacred when he secretly engaged in acts hostile to the cause of his country ; as a deputy, protected by his legislative, and an ambassador, shielded in his diplomatic capacity, were still responsible for the deeds of their private life. The fiercer spirits of the Mountain did not descend to argument, but demanded his condemnation without a trial. "Posterity," exclaimed St. Just, a young but savage enthusiast, frenzied by ideas of universal equality, "posterity will be astonished that the eighteenth century yields in intelligence to the era of Cæsar, when a tyrant was immolated in the senate with no further formality than twenty-three thrusts of a dagger, and no other law than the liberty of Rome ; while to-day you deliberate on the trial of a man who assassinated his people and was captured in the flagrant act." The speech of Robespierre, though less excited, was still more specious and dangerous. He represented the death of the king as indispensable for the republic's consolidation, and demanded his instant condemnation. But the majority of the Convention shrank from the injustice, and resolved that Louis

should first appear at their bar. A committee was accordingly appointed to frame an act of accusation, to which it was determined the king should personally answer; and after an interval of two days, allotted to defence, again appear at their tribunal for judgment. It was also resolved that during his trial he should be separated from his family—an act of harsh and needless severity. Intelligence of these proceedings was conveyed to the imprisoned monarch by his sister, and received with all the passive indifference of his character. He had long been prepared for the catastrophe by the increased rigour of his guards, who had latterly deprived him of the means of correspondence, as well as of finding refuge in the last resource of despair; and, by a refinement in cruelty, of all information except that afforded by the republican journals, which announced the victories of the commonwealth, the dispersion of his friends, the triumph of his foes, and thus dispelled the last ray of hope that lingered in his breast.*

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18. On the morning of the king's destined appearance in the chamber, the whole capital was in a state of commotion. At an early hour the drums beat to quarters, the various divisions of the commune assembled, the different sections of the city were armed, the posts fortified, the guards doubled, and the movements of military masses contributed, with the agitation of the inhabitants, to form a dismal sound, which penetrated the recesses of his prison, and the hearts of many of the captive monarch's still sympathizing subjects. The king had been isolated from his family, and confined for two hours in a solitary chamber, until the arrival of Chambon, the newly elected mayor, who summoned him, by

The Day
of Trial.

* *Moniteur*, Seance du 3 Nov. 1792; *Mignet* i. 367-374; *Lacretelle* x. 158-164.

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the name of Louis Capet, to appear at the bar of his people. "That is not my name, though it belonged to one of my ancestors," was the simple reply of Louis, as, rising up, he followed the official to his carriage, and proceeded to the Convention, amid a formidable body of troops and the impressive silence of a vast assemblage. In the hall of the legislature he was received with still more ominous tranquillity. "Let us frighten him by the silence of the tomb," exclaimed the ferocious Jacobin, Legendre; and though the murmurs of the assembly disavowed the unmanly sentiment, not a whisper was heard on his approach. "Citizens," said the president, Barrere, with unfeeling emotion, "Europe surveys, and posterity will judge you with inflexible severity. Preserve the dignity and imperturbability which become you; and remember the terrible silence which attended Louis when brought from Varennes."*

Louis's
Appear-
ance at the
Bar; first
Day's pro-
ceedings;

19. The calm and dignified tranquillity displayed by the king on his entrance, momentarily affected the assembly. The Girondists received him with expressive regard; the centre of the chamber evinced still more commiseration; and even the obdurate Jacobins could scarcely suppress some transient emotion on observing that the misfortunes of the monarch failed to ruffle the fortitude of the man. "Sit down, Louis," said the president, with benignity, "and reply to the questions that shall be asked of you." He obeyed, and listened to the lengthened indictment with a resignation which still more mitigated resentment. The act of accusation extended to the year 1789, and charged him with the various calamities which had occurred in the interval. All the faults of the court were concentrated on his

the Indict-
ment.

* Moniteur, Seance du 11 Dec. 1792.

head ; all the crimes of the nobles attributed to his instigation. He was accused of having intrigued to overthrow the constitution with Mirabeau, whose popularity had already disappeared, and of bribing the deputies, to produce a counter-revolution. He was reproached for resisting the decrees of the assemblies, and deserting his country in the flight to Varrennes. Lafayette's attack on the rioters in Champs de Mars was unwarrantably assigned to his order ; and his opposition to the contemplated, but now abandoned, encampment of Paris, reverberated again on his ear. With less injustice he was inculpated for corresponding with the emigrants, and for secret communication with foreign powers ; though ties of affection bound him to the one, and self-preservation dictated the other. But to detail the protracted impeachment, it were necessary to re-enumerate all the crimes and calamities with which the reader already is familiar. The long catalogue of charges comprehended every misfortune of his reign, and terminated by representing the massacre of the populace on the 10th of August as the consequence of his criminal conduct. To the various articles of impeachment Louis circumspectly replied by a simple negative, or by reference to the responsibility of his ministers and the authority he received from the constitution, according as the subject of accusation was unfounded in fact, attributable to the ministry, or authorized by the national charter ; but to the last charge, " You caused the blood of the people to be shed on the 10th of August," he energetically answered, " No, no, it was not I ;" and the emotion with which he disclaimed participation in the deeds of that ensanguined day, raised in his favour a deep sympathy, which, however, was im-

CHAP. immediately dispelled (such is the sacred force of truth)
 IV. by his succeeding denial of the secret archive in his
 1792. palace, the existence of which had been betrayed by an
 artisan employed with himself in its fabrication, of
 whose recent treachery he yet was ignorant.* A
 letter to the bishop of Clermont, found in this recess,
 in which Louis promised, on recovering his authority,
 to restore the ancient government, completed his
 confusion ; the Convention was convinced of his guilt,
 and he left the bar with condemnation already on his
 brow, to return to the Temple and supplicate to see
 his afflicted family, but supplicate in vain. The
 legislature granted his request for the indulgence of
 the purest of earthly affections ; but the commune
 interposed, and after a fierce contention, the quarrel
 was compromised by a decree that the young dauphin
 should be admitted to his presence, on condition of
 separation from the mother. Marital feelings, how-
 ever, prevailed over paternal love ; and Louis refused
 a compact which would have deprived his distracted
 queen of her chief consolation.

The King's
 Counsel.

20. Before leaving the bar, the royal prisoner re-
 quested the assistance of counsel, but the privilege
 was not granted without opposition. The Jacobins
 resisted this protraction of a trial whose delay they
 considered inconsistent with their safety ; yet the better
 feelings of the Girondists prevailed, and the king re-
 ceived not only the aid he desired, but also the means
 of completing his defence and perusing the documents
 arrayed against him. His choice fell on Target and
 Tronchet, two Parisian barristers of eminence ; but
 the former, though he had long basked in the smiles
 of his sovereign, basely shrunk from assisting him in
 the hour of distress, forgetting that under such cir-

* Thiers, iii. 333.

cumstances honour is co-equal with danger. Numbers, however, eager to aid their monarch in life or in death, volunteered to assume the enviable post; but Louis accepted only the service of Malasherbes, a venerable advocate who had formerly opposed him when in the zenith of his power, and whose noble ambition was now to defend him in the abyss of misfortune. A third and younger pleader, the eloquent Deseze, was subsequently appointed to deliver the oration, when it was found that the advanced age of the others, and their incessant exertions, rendered them incapable of completing their labours within the period allowed for defence.

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21. On the morning of the 26th of December Louis was again conducted to the bar with alike imposing array, and displayed, both in his progress and presence, the same equanimity as on his first arraignment. Suffering being now his lot, the placid fortitude of his temper enabled him to suffer well; and never in the whole course of his reign had he evinced such dignity as when his career approached its final close. Seated between Tronchet and Malasherbes, with whom he frequently conversed and exchanged cheerful in return for their melancholy smiles,* he attentively watched the impression of Deseze's oration on the assembly, who listened in mournful silence. The defence was founded chiefly on his inviolability as established by the constitution; and the advocate impetuously demanded that if the Convention, by repudiating the acts of two successive chambers, denied his client the rights of a sovereign, it should at least leave him the liberty of a citizen. The laws of the state, he said, ordained that accusation should not be produced, and judgment pro-

Second
Day of
Trial;

the
Defence.

* Lacretelle, x. 198.

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IV.

1792.

Deseze's
Peroration.

nounced by the same tribunal; they secured to the prisoner the privilege of objecting to his jury, and rendered the concurrence of two-thirds—whose impartiality should be secured by a secret vote—necessary for conviction. When the ominous silence of his audience indicated how vain was this appeal, he intrepidly remarked that he looked for judges but found only accusers, and proceeded to refute the various articles of impeachment; arranging his defence in two divisions, the first of which embraced subjects of accusation prior to the establishment of the constitution, and, as he contended, annulled by its acceptance; the second comprehending those which had subsequently occurred, and were, in his opinion, equally negatived by the personal irresponsibility of the king. Relying with confidence on these principal points, he disputed the justice of the indictment; denied, with partial success, the existence of Louis's correspondence with foreign powers, of which, though in possession of many corroborative facts, the Convention as yet had no positive proof; and more triumphantly refuted his alleged criminality in the insurrection on the 10th of August. His glowing speech was concluded by an eloquent recapitulation of the sovereign's career. "Louis" said he, in this splendid but exaggerated peroration, "ascended the throne in the twentieth year of his age, and during twenty years he displayed an example of propriety, devoid alike of culpable weakness and corrupt passion. In that station he was economical, just, and virtuous; and evinced a constant devotion to his people. When the commons desired the destruction of those oppressive imposts under which they groaned, he destroyed them; when they demanded the abolition of feudal servitude, he commenced by abolishing it in

his own domains. The people solicited a reform in criminal legislation, he granted it; they wished that the thousands of Frenchmen whom ancient proscription deprived of their rights, should regain those privileges, and his laws conferred that enjoyment. The country wished liberty, he gave it; though in giving it he sacrificed his own; and yet it was in the name of the country that a greater sacrifice was that day demanded." "Citizens," said he, in conclusion, "history will sit in judgment on your verdict, and its sentence will be the sentence of centuries!"*

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22. A brief, but affecting and impressive speech was read by Louis when his advocate sat down. Addressing them for the last time, perhaps (such was the tenor of his words), he declared his conscience reproached him not; that he feared no public examination of his conduct, but his heart was torn by the imputation of shedding the blood of his people; a charge which the whole of his life belied. The defence of his advocate was firm, his own was submissive, but not inglorious; and on finishing a few simple yet touching sentences, he was again conducted to the Temple, which he re-entered with undisturbed serenity. "I shall now," he said, "die with tranquillity; my memory will be honoured, and the French will regret me."†

Louis's
Speech.

23. His retirement was the signal for the outburst of a fierce storm in the chamber. The more violent members demanded an instant verdict; but their clamour was resisted by many of the king's former foes, whom his recent demeanour had deeply affected. Languinais, an ardent Girondist, threw

Scene on
his Retirement.

* "Je m'arrête devant l'histoire; songez qu'elle jugera votre jugement, et que le sien sera celui des siècles!"—Thiers, iii, 353.

† Lacretelle, x, 216.

CHAP. himself into the tribune, and impetuously insisted
IV. that the whole proceeding should be annulled, as an

1792. ungenerous persecution of the vanquished by the victors. He indignantly denied the legality of trying the monarch before a tribunal whose members were the avowed conspirators of the 10th of August. The Mountain had hitherto impatiently heard his harangue; but on the sound of the word "conspirators," furious exclamations of "Order!" "To the Abbey!" and "Down from the tribune!" burst from all parts of the hall. The orator vainly endeavoured to quell the tumult by modifying the expression into that of a "glorious conspiracy." He was forced to abandon the rostrum, to which a crowd of members immediately rushed. The whole assembly rose; each deputy speaking, gesticulating, and menacing another. A scene of disorder for an hour ensued, during which, in the midst of a thousand voices, not one was heard; but the king's friends succeeded in gaining the desired delay; the discussion was adjourned till next day, though it was agreed the deliberation should then proceed without interruption.

Debate on
the Verdict
Dec. 27th.

24. On the morning of the 27th the debate recommenced, and the Jacobins were the first to enter the arena. St. Just, one of their youngest, yet fiercest leaders, immediately threw himself into the lists, with all the impetuosity of an ancient gladiator. His heart, though generally insensible to the voice of pity, and steeled by the dictates of the sternest fanaticism, had been momentarily affected by the meek yet undaunted appearance of the king; but quickly yielding to the impulse of a savage enthusiasm, which prompted him to pursue his aim uninfluenced either by commiseration or remorse, he

described Louis as a specious tyrant who, in his defence, was modest only to escape, as he had formerly been mild merely to destroy. The dark penetrating eye of the orator glowed with emotion, his cold but expressive, austere yet melancholy countenance kindled with indignation, while he reviewed the conduct of the court since 1789, and depicted, in shades dismal as his own imagination, those acts in which more vacillation than criminality had been displayed by its feeble head. He represented the concessions of the king as hypocritical, and his joy at the triumph of the people, to be equally unnatural and insincere; accused him of having resorted to corruption of its representatives when force against the nation failed, and of intriguing with foreign powers for the invasion of France, until his secret correspondence forced even his ministers to resign. To his inexorable mind, Louis's conduct until the 10th of August appeared stained by the deepest perfidy, and his subsequent sorrow the result of the profoundest hypocrisy. Salles, a member of the Plain, but attached to the Girondists, succeeded to St. Just; and attempted to save the king by the undecided policy characteristic of that party. While he admitted Louis's guilt, which in his estimation deserved punishment severe, he maintained that his condemnation would excite the hostility of united Europe; but as his acquittal would, by rallying the royalists, be equally dangerous to France, he proposed that the decision of his fate, whether detention or death, should be pronounced by the electoral assemblies of the country. Different emotions were excited in the chamber by this proposal. The moderate republicans, desirous of saving Louis, and recollecting the result of the English revolution,

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Speech of
St. Just.Proposition of
Salles.

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Demands
of Robes-
pierre.

Conduct
of the
Girondists.

when the judges of one sovereign were executed as regicides by another ; anxious also, perhaps, for their own security, eagerly grasped at a compromise which should relieve them from a painful duty now, and probably from a dangerous dilemma hereafter ; but it was opposed by the ardent revolutionists, who considered that to hesitate was to succumb, and to recede was to perish. In their estimation the legislature had advanced too far to forgive, or to entertain hopes of being forgiven. They saw no alternative between acquittal and destruction, and chose the latter ; resolving by one blow to secure their safety and establish their power. Robespierre accordingly denounced the motion, rejected a severer course recommended by the Girondist, Buzot, of condemning the king but reserving an appeal to the nation ; and demanded an instant declaration of guilt, with an immediate sentence of death. Numerous members of the Plain and Mountain followed ; and during a debate of three days, contended for a sentence of death with delay, or of condemnation without appeal, as their leaders previously enjoined. The Girondists hitherto had remained irresolute and silent. Commiserating Louis's condition, and desirous of interposing between him and his foes, they were yet afraid to act with decision ; and while their feelings prompted them to save, their fears induced them to condemn. By this pusillanimity both themselves and the victim of their vacillation were compromised ; their indecision terminating in feeble efforts, ineffectual to secure the one from his impending destiny, and the others from their ultimate doom. The proposal of an appeal to the nation was believed to emanate from them, and when they found longer silence impracticable, it was supported by Vergniaud,

their most brilliant orator, in one of his greatest orations. "Courage," he said, "was required to attack Louis in the height of his power, but none could be displayed by his condemnation when vanquished and disarmed." To sentence him to death, was no proof of fortitude; "A brave Roman soldier," he exclaimed, "when sent to murder Marius in prison, fled, frightened by the aspect of the captive; a base senate alone was capable of decreeing the cowardly sentence." He concluded by drawing a dismal, yet prophetic picture of the calamities that would follow, and conjured his countrymen, by mercy to the prisoner, to avert anarchy at home and invasion from abroad. But though by means of their commanding majority, the Girondists might in the first instance have rescued the king, the attempt was now too late; and notwithstanding that all the eloquence of the party was several days exerted in his aid, the feeble reply of Barrere—who, until victory preponderated, basely hovered between the Mountain and the Plain, and eventually dragged the irresolute members of each in his course—virtually decided Louis's fate. In spite of friendly efforts to protract the debate, it terminated on the 7th of January, and the 14th of the same month was appointed for the declaration of its momentuous result.*

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1792-3.

Vergniaud's
Speech.

25. In the interval extreme agitation prevailed; and when the portentous day at last arrived, crowds of revolutionists and royalists rushed to the Convention, eager to hear a verdict pregnant, according to their different opinions, with weal to the nation or woe to the monarch. Amongst the members of the legislature equal anxiety existed; though, yielding to that nervous hesitation which voluntarily protracts

The
Verdict.

* Moniteur, Seances du 27, 28, 29, 30, 31 Dec. 1792, et jusqu'au 7 Jan. 1793.

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the consummation of a crisis, howsoever ardently desired, they endeavoured to prolong the event by a tedious and confused debate on the form of the verdict. Ultimately, however, they determined on three questions:—"Whether Louis Capet were guilty of conspiracy against the nation's liberty, and of attempts on the safety of the state?" "Whether the sentence should be ratified by the people?" and finally, "What penalty should be inflicted?"—on each of which it was resolved that every member should deliver his opinion separately, and the majority determine the result. The first of these issues six hundred and eighty-three deputies, in an assembly of seven hundred and forty-nine, quickly decided by declaring him Guilty; four hundred and twenty, in opposition to two hundred and eighty-one, resolved that the sentence should not be subject to the country's confirmation; but a longer interval elapsed before the chamber pronounced the last and most momentous decision of all. During two days and three nights of suspense, the utmost excitement existed both in the Convention and the city. The friends of the king, aware of the vital importance of delay, exerted every effort to protract the proceedings. In the chamber, Languinai and Lehardy demanded that a majority of two-thirds should, as in criminal trials, be required for condemnation; and when the application failed, it was followed by an interposition of the Spanish ambassador equally idle. Louis's counsel next requested to be heard, but were refused until decision of the sentence. His enemies, meanwhile, bestirred themselves with more success; and the populace, excited by harangues which identified his destruction with the safety of the state, proceeded each day to the hall, and with

fierce imprecations demanded condemnation. Numbers of the deputies intrepidly braved the popular fury which burst out on the announcement of every vote but for death; and one, Duchastel, in the extremity of life, accelerated his own dissolution by hastening to avert that of his sovereign. The majority, however, yielded to intimidation, and pronounced the irrevocable word. The example of the Duke of Orleans decided the result. This degraded prince, seeing no escape except in following the revolutionary torrent, advanced with faltering steps to the bar, and in accents still more faltering, declared that "impelled by his duty to the country he voted for death without appeal." A burst of indignation assailed him, and a thrill of horror momentarily pervaded the hall, as he thus, from motives of private revenge or of self-preservation, consigned the head of his house to destruction, and avowedly preferred the dictates of patriotism to the ties of blood. But the multitude soon reiterated their calls for vengeance; the succeeding deputies, impelled by the threats of merciless men, and the smiles of still more inexorable women, for the most part followed in his footsteps; and after a tumultuous nocturnal meeting, three hundred and sixty-one members of the Convention voted unconditionally for death.*

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26. When the verdict was announced, Louis's advocates renewed their demand for a popular appeal; but in vain: they succeeded, however, in obtaining the appointment of next day for consideration of a respite, and the whole of that, with the following, was exhausted by expedients for delay; in which the friends of the king were now joined by the Girondists, who viewed with alarm the terrible ascend-

The Sentence.

* Lacretelle, x. 211, 237; Mignet, i. 376, 380.

CHAP. ancy of the Jacobins, and the excitement prevailing
IV. in Paris at the approaching execution of the king.

1793. Yet the efforts of both were idle : in the discussion that ensued the advocates and the opponents of reprieve for a time remained equipoised ; the most strenuous exertions were made by the royalists, several of whom abbreviated their own existence by leaving the couch of dissolution to repair to the Convention, and by their vote endeavour to protract the life of the monarch. Many of the moderate republicans joined them, believing that though justice is the first duty of power, mercy is a prerogative nobler still : but the Mountainists, to their own surprise,* prevailed ; and heard, with astonishment, equalled only by their adversaries' dismay, the declaration of the president, when he, on the morning of the 20th of January, announced that three hundred and eighty members of the Convention, in opposition to three hundred and ten, voted for death without delay, and charged the ministry with the immediate execution of the sentence.

Conduct of
the King.

27. The fatal decision was communicated to Louis by the minister of justice ; and he received a command to prepare for death next day without evincing the slightest emotion. His counsel, Malasherbes, shortly afterwards entering the apartment, found him plunged in darkness and deep meditation. " I have been endeavouring," said the unfortunate monarch, as he rose from a table on which his arms had reclined, " I have been endeavouring to discover whether, during the course of my reign, I could accuse myself of ever deserving from my subjects the slightest reproach, and I swear to you in all the sincerity of a man about to appear before God that I

* Thiers, iii. 390.

have constantly desired the welfare of my people, and never formed a wish contrary to their happiness.”* CHAP.
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Quickly recovering his composure, he addressed a letter to the Convention, in which he supplicated three days of preparation for death, the aid of a priest to assist him in devotion, permission to embrace his family, and leave for its departure from France after his decease. During the interval he dined with his wonted appetite; and, on observing the studied abstraction of a knife, with dignity remarked that “they aspersed his courage who suspected him of suicidal intentions; for, confiding in his innocence, he could die without fear.”† On the arrival of an answer, refusing a respite, and all his requests except the interview and religious indulgence, he exhibited no perturbation; and after passing a few hours in devotion and conversation with his priest, on those topics to which the timid on the eve of dissolution so naturally turn, he retired to the apartments of his family, to bid a final adieu. The scene of their meeting was agonizing in the extreme; and penetrated the hearts of even the obdurate guards, who, with the religious attendant, remained beyond a glass separation to watch and witness the appalling misery within. Throwing themselves into each other’s arms, they freely indulged in those feelings which their late separation and long misfortunes were calculated to impart—feelings neither chilled by separation nor weakened by sorrow. During a long interval no sound was heard but sobs and cries of desolation and despair; and when they were at last exhausted by clamorous grief it was succeeded by a still more harrowing silent wretchedness. A long and subdued conversation was subsequently

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His Family
Adieu.

* Mignet, i. 385.

† Thiers, iii. 392.

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interchanged in the mute whispers of woe; and on its termination, Louis with difficulty released himself from the embrace of his wife, who hung to him by one arm, while his sister clung to the other, and his children seized his knees, or struggled at his feet,* overcome by the holiest of human emotions. Promising to revisit them in the morning, he at last tore himself from the grasp of the queen, though the princess Elizabeth still lingered on his lips with a kiss which she swooned in giving. The guards interposed; the bitterness of parting was past; and leaving the disconsolate mourners to shed their tears in unison, he withdrew to his chamber, in whose solitude he soon recovered his wonted serenity; and, after spending some hours in devotion, retired towards midnight to his bed, where, though on the verge of the tomb, he slept with undisturbed tranquillity until the approach of the morning sun warned him to sleep no more—or to prepare for an everlasting slumber.

State of
Paris;

28. The agitation meanwhile hourly increased in the capital, for the misfortunes of royalty are calculated to excite compassion; and those who could not avert the fate of the king already shewed a disposition to avenge it. Kersaint, one of Louis's adherents in the chamber, repudiated his legislative rank with disdain. Lepelletier, another of the judges, was assassinated by a royalist for concurring in the sentence of death; and fears were entertained that a rescue would yet be attempted by the monarchy's desperate partisans. The Convention and the Commune adopted strong precautions to quell the expected tumult; but no effort of resistance appeared; the royalists, overwhelmed in grief, and the revolutionists, astonished by their own success, awaited in silent awe the catastrophe of the morrow.

Murder of
Lepel-
letier;

* Clery, p. 173.

29. On the morning of execution Louis awoke at an early hour ; and, after passing some time in devotion, calmly awaited the arrival of the authorities appointed to conduct him to the scaffold. Notwithstanding his promise of the previous eve, he resolved to save his family from the bitterness of a final separation, lest the agony of parting should overpower his feelings and lacerate their own ; and he was engaged in entrusting Clery, his attendant, with a ring and some tender reminiscences for his wife and children, when Santerre, the commander of the Parisian Guard, with a deputation from the commune, entered the apartment. Louis arose and received them with dignity ; and, after requesting one of the authorities to transmit his will to the municipality—which the official, an apostate priest, named Roux, coarsely refused,*—gave a signal for the departure of the mournful cavalcade. On his entrance into the chariot, accompanied by his confessor and two guardsmen, instructed, it is said, to dispatch him in the event of any attempted rescue, the procession set out surrounded by a powerful body of troops, which rendered all such efforts hopeless, and slowly passed through the dense mass of spectators, whose silence contributed, with the desolate appearance of the city, to increase the naturally dismal aspect of the scene. After a painful progress of two hours' duration, he at last reached the place of execution, a large space in front of the legislative hall, presenting a full view of the palace of his ancestors. It had previously been distinguished by the name of his ignoble predecessor, but was then, as it has since been, de-

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Execution
of Louis
XVI.

* "I come to conduct you to punishment, not to execute your commissions," was the unfeeling reply ; but another member was found less obdurate, and proffered to transmit the document.—Thiers, iii. 432.

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Jan. 21.

signated after that revolution which had been originated chiefly by the vices of the one, and was now to be confirmed by the blood of the other. On his arrival at the guillotine—a new instrument of death designed by an amiable physician to alleviate human suffering, and destined to confer on the inventor an odious immortality,*—three executioners advanced to remove his dress and bind his hands; but he repulsed their offer, unrobed himself, and displayed a momentary resistance alike undignified and unavailing, when they a second time insisted on securing his limbs. Immediately, however, yielding to the voice of his priest, who admonished him to submit and place his trust in God, he resigned himself into their hands without a struggle; and on the completion of the painful ordeal, approached to the verge of the scaffold, for the purpose of delivering a final address. “Frenchmen,” he cried, in a powerful voice, “I die innocent of the crimes imputed to my charge; but I pardon my enemies, and implore that my blood may not recoil upon France.” He was proceeding to protest that he had never transgressed the bounds of his authority—and his speech had already made some favourable impression on the degraded beings who surrounded the instrument of death and at first received him with that savage joy which abject minds are so apt to display while triumphant over rank,—when the roll of the drums interrupted his utterance; and, before their noise had ceased, his religious attendant, the abbot Edgeworth, exclaimed, “Son of St. Louis! ascend to heaven,”† and the descent of the axe removed him from regal cares and earthly sorrows.

* The instrument was fancifully termed, “*La Guillotine*,” or the “Doctor’s Daughter.”

† Edgeworth, p. 226.

30. The fierce shouts of the degraded portion of the populace conveyed to the Temple the first intelligence of the catastrophe, and proclaimed their exultation at a deed whose justice succeeding generations will be disposed to deny. Repudiating the despotic doctrine that sovereigns are responsible to Omnipotence alone—a species of responsibility whose present immunity counterpoises any future terrors,—and acknowledging that collusion with the public enemy is a crime for which a monarch is justly amenable to the judgment of his people, impartial posterity may still discern in the career of Louis XVI. many circumstances to palliate his conduct and extenuate his guilt. He was less culpable than feeble, more imprudent than criminal; and his misfortunes are to be ascribed rather to his own vacillating temper than either to the violence of his friends, or the vindictiveness of his foes. It was by vacillation more than by vice that his power was first subverted and finally subdued. Of all the sixty sovereigns who previously had swayed the sceptre of France, he was perhaps the least calculated to arouse, and undoubtedly the most incompetent to resist, the indignation of his subjects. But it was his fate to ascend the throne at a period when concession to popular power was demanded; and his misfortune that he either did not concede in time, or that by the weakness of his own character and the conduct of his court, he inspired distrust in the sincerity of his concessions. It was his still greater calamity that, after acceding to the just demands of his people, he had not the resolution to oppose their unjust infringements of his power. If he had sincerely concurred in the first constitution, and, when his palace and prerogatives were assailed, descended at the head of

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His Character and
Conduct.

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his gallant guards, determined that the end of his life and his power should be simultaneous, he might have lived like the most honoured, or died like the most glorious of his ancestors. But his intrigues with the restless emigrants, his correspondence with refractory clergy, and his collusion with the hostile allies, prove his faithless attachment to the one ; and his want of the active courage which sustains the hero in the field, or the despot amid danger, and is so different from that, perhaps less vulgar, yet assuredly less valuable, passive fortitude which supports the martyr at the stake, or the victim on the scaffold, rendered him incompetent for the other. The chief question for our consideration is the justice of his sentence ; and it must be admitted that though invested by the constitution with that personal irresponsibility which despots are justly denied, and limited monarchs deservedly enjoy, he forfeited the immunity by his expressed determination to restore the ancient government on the recovery of his power.* Yet his private virtues might have saved him from the cruelty of his fate, if the virtues of a man may be arrayed against the vices of a monarch ; for, though in his character there be no genius to excite admiration, nor resolution to command respect ; and though his devotion—which sprang from an attachment to the external symbols, rather than from an innate sense of religion, and was exhibited more in a grovelling observance of the idle ceremonies of the church than in a true reverence of the Creator,—may inspire more pity than sympathy, and more contempt than either ; yet the benignity of his disposition must extort the homage of esteem. In

* See his letter to the Bishop of Clermont, *ut antea* ; and Campan. ii. Appendix.

all the duties of domestic life he was exemplary: his affection for his children was ardent; his attachment to his queen unbounded, and, until the days of his misfortune, bestowed with a love more sincere than reciprocal. In the other relations of society he was amiable, though his simplicity was sometimes mingled with insincerity, his sense invariably disfigured by superstition, and, in his intercourse with men, he blended humility with haughtiness, under a timid yet distant address, which shrank alike from receiving and imparting confidence. His handsome but heavy features expressed at once the amenity and weakness of his character; his overgrown person indicated the irresolution and languor of his nature. His enemies have accused him of sensuality; but the charge of inebriation appears unfounded, that of voracity exaggerated; and there is no evidence of other indulgences beyond those which were tolerated by the license of the age, and engendered by the education of a prince, or cherished by the culture of a court. His virtues were his own, his vices belonged to his station; and the former increased, while the latter diminished with his misfortunes. The character of the hapless prince became elevated with his calamities, and the day of his death was the noblest of his life. But such considerations cannot arrest the judgment of posterity. Justice may exculpate the death of England's Charles, but humanity will long recoil from the fate of France's Louis; and though philosophy deprecates the perpetration of evil for the prospect of good, yet history must own that the life of a man is sacrificed well when lost to secure the liberty of millions.

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CHAPTER V.

FROM THE EXECUTION OF THE KING TILL THE EXPULSION OF THE GIRONDISTS.

1. Effect of Louis's Execution on Foreign Powers.—2. Condition and Views of European States; England; Holland; Spain; Austria; Prussia; the Italian States; Northern Powers, Russia;—Conduct of France; Convention's Decree of general War.—3. Internal Condition of France; State of Parties.—4. Famine and Agrarian Riot in Paris.—5. Military Reverses; State of Belgium; Despotic Conduct of the French; its Consequences.—6. Hostilities in Holland, and on the Rhine; Dumouriez's projected Invasion of Holland, attempted and defeated; other Reverses.—7. Proceedings in Paris; new Revolutionary Tribunal; Insurrection on 10th of March.—8. Dumouriez's Disaffection; Battle of Neerwinde; Defeat of the French; and Treason of Dumouriez.—9. Acts against Dumouriez; his Retirement: Summary of his Career.—10. Civil War.—11. Creation of Committee of Public Safety.—12. The Commune's Projected Committee of General Safety.—13. Impeachment of the Girondists; Speeches of Robespierre, Vergniaud and Gaudet; Marat's Address; Failure of the Attempt.—14. Trial and Acquittal of Marat.—15. Civil War in La Vendee; Character and Customs of the Peasants; Nature of the Country: the Peasants' cowardly Warfare; their Seigneurs and Priests; their Leaders, Cathelineau, Beauchamps, Larochejacquelein, D'Elbée, Lescure, and Charette; their Victories; Insurrectionary Disposition of Lyons, Marseilles, and other Towns; Death of Dampierre.—16. Proceedings in Paris; Acts of the Commune; of the Convention; New Revolutionary Committee of the Commune.—17. Its Suppression; Consequences of; Insurrection on 31st of May.—18. Insurrection on 2nd of June; Expulsion of the Girondists; their Conduct, and Character.

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Effect of
Louis's
Execution
on Foreign
Powers.

1. The death of Louis accelerated that rupture with the European Powers which the frequent ebullition of republican violence, since his dethronement, tended to provoke. Many sovereigns had previously fallen by open violence or by domestic guilt; but since the era of Agis, the Lacedemonian, only one had lost his life by the sentence of his subjects; and the recurrence of the impressive example was calculated to make each despot tremble for his safety. Before this eventful act Austria and Prussia were the only declared enemies of France; other states, however

secretly adverse to the revolution, had refrained from open hostility—the dangerous impolicy of interfering with the internal affairs of foreign nations having restrained despotic dynasties, and the admiration with which the subjects of less arbitrary governments at first hailed, and long surveyed, the nativity of freedom in a foreign land, withheld their rulers from imposing any obstacle to its birth. But the halo which at first encircled the infant progeny gradually disappeared as the revolution advanced to maturity; and when, in the recent deeds of August and September, license in its wildest excess was substituted for enlightened liberty, even enthusiastic friends of freedom yielded to gloomy anticipations of anarchy. The king's execution increased the animosity which unbridled democracy naturally excites in refined society; and even those who considered that every century requires a like immolation, commiserated the fate and deplored the selection of the victim. The admiration excited by that dauntless resistance which the republic, in the midst of intestine strife, had successfully opposed to external foes, was diminished by the memorable decree of the Convention, proffering aid to the discontented of every country, and dispelled by the preparations subsequently made to carry war and desolation into every clime. This impolitic declaration outraged both the principles of the revolution, which disclaimed such interference, and the feelings of the sovereigns whom it threatened with insurrection; and the indignation it aroused in royal breasts was not diminished when the republic now, in its own fearful language, defied them by “hurling the heads of a king and six thousand prisoners, as a gage of battle, at their feet.” *

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* Thiers, vi. 492.

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Condition
and Views
of Euro-
pean States.
England.

Holland.

Spain.

2. After the king's deposition on the 10th of August, the republic in vain demanded to be recognized by foreign powers. England, over which Pitt exercised despotic sway, stood haughtily aloof; recalled her ambassador; and though her minister, by means of a secret French envoy, still maintained with France some relations of peace, the latter surmised that he desired delay only to enable him to prepare for war. Nor was the suspicion unfounded. In the interval he had not been inactive. While with the energetic impetuosity of his character he concentrated the strength of that country whose helm he grasped and guided with a vigour which inspired hatred at home and reverence abroad, he at the same time established the foundation of those continental alliances and national embarrassments which England in the third generation laments, and will for ages continue to deplore. Holland was excited by the fears of the Stadtholder, who had not yet recovered from the panic of a recent insurrection; and while he dreaded a renewal of the revolt, his subjects were not less apprehensive for the injury their commerce would sustain by the opening of the Scheldt, in consequence of France's Belgian invasion. Spain was inspired by friendly sympathy for the stem of her house which lately filled the throne of France, and menaced in consequence of interposing to prevent it from being severed. On her ambassador's interference to rescue Louis from his fate, Danton proposed to reply by an instant declaration of war; and though the Convention for the time postponed hostilities, by passing to the order of the day, the germs of mutual distrust were sown, and the subsequent conduct of the republic contributed, with that of Godoy, the feeble Prince of Peace, to bring the har-

vest of war to maturity. Austria was still more incited by family ties. She had bestowed a queen upon France; and though the husband was gone, it still remained incumbent on her to save the lives of the children and mother. Prussia was inspired by pride and revenge to renew a campaign in which the laurels of the great Frederic's veteran troops had been sullied by disorganized republican levies. Piedmont was already engaged in hostility with France; and Sardinia, as well as the other Italian states, entertained a virulent animosity to revolutionary principles. In the North, Sweden and Denmark imitated Switzerland in neutrality; but a dangerous foe to republican institutions existed on the Russian throne, where the imperial Catherine then revelled with all the licence of a despot and licentiousness of a harlot. Hitherto she had been occupied with designs on Poland and intrigues to fix the attention of Austria and Prussia on distant scenes, while she promoted her own views of aggrandizement; but the recent annexation of the former to her dominion now left her free to throw her arms into whatever cause inclination might prompt or policy should dictate. On the whole the coalition against France was the most formidable of any the Continent had witnessed for centuries; but the republicans prepared to meet it with the desperate energy of men determined to conquer or to perish. Justly considering open hostility as less dangerous than secret enmity, and aware that the king's execution had placed a barrier inseparable between it and the occupants of other thrones, the Convention, on the day subsequent to that deed, resolved to diminish the danger by hastening to meet it. A committee was appointed to review the foreign relations of the country; and, anticipating a decla-

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Austria.

Prussia.

The Italian
States.The North-
ern Powers.

Russia.

Conduct of
France.Conven-
tion's De-
cree of
General
War.

CHAP. ration of hostilities in consequence of its envoy's
 V: dismissal from England, the legislature, on the 1st of
 1793. February, proclaimed war against England and Hol-
 land; determined, in the instance of the one, to
 escape aggression by becoming the aggressor, in that
 of the other to repel invaders by an act of invasion;
 and considering all who were not for, as against it,
 threw down the gauntlet to Europe in arms.*

Internal
 Condition
 of France.

State of
 Parties.

3. The position of the republic at this period was
 perilous in the extreme; menaced by powerful forces
 abroad, and distracted by dangerous dissensions at
 home. The death of Louis had excited consternation
 in France as well as indignation in Europe; but the
 event which inspired the Jacobins with increased
 audacity, overwhelmed the Girondists with additional
 dismay; encouraged the one to pursue, and disheart-
 ened the other from resisting that arbitrary violence
 of which his execution was the prelude. The Giron-
 dists, with many members of the Plain, were desirous
 of terminating the reign of anarchy, by settling the
 constitution which the Convention had been assembled
 to construct; the Jacobins were equally eager to
 protract the confusion by which they had acquired,
 and expected to maintain, their power. The object
 of their mutual hostility gone, the long impending
 contest between them began, and was conducted
 with a ferocity which mutual destruction alone could
 quench. In the beginning of the struggle their suc-
 cess was reciprocal; the Girondists obtained Pache's
 dismissal from the war ministry on account of his
 Jacobin subserviency and official incompetence; but
 their adversaries triumphed in the resignation of
 Roland, who, thwarted in all his plans, retired in
 consequence of inability to discharge his duty. Un-

* *Moniteur*, Seance du 1 Feb. 1793.

appeased by this success, the Jacobins followed up the attack by demanding his trial, as well as the ejection of Clavières and Lebrun, his associates in office; and obliterated Pache's disgrace by elevating him to the mayoralty of Paris in the room of Chambon, an unassuming physician, who had replaced Petion, and proved equally unfit for the degrading honour. The suppression of the decree for the trial of the Septembral assassins consummated the triumph of the violent republicans; and their boldness increasing with success, they resolved to commemorate their escape from one tribunal by erecting the Convention itself into another. The Jacobins had objects of fear as well as their opponents: the murder of Lepelletier afforded them reason, or pretext, for considering their own lives dependent on the death of their foes; and they determined to render the legislature an instrument for the immolation of others and ultimately of its own.

4. Famine added its terrors to those of anarchy. ^{Famine and} By the depreciation of the currency, and consequent distress of commerce, a scarcity had been produced in all the indispensable elements of life. Though provisions existed in comparative abundance, they were beyond the reach of the poor, as vendors proved unwilling, except for exorbitant advantage, to exchange their substantial property for uncertain *assignats*, which had been established by one revolution and might be abolished by another. The distress was greatest in the capital, where, if the chief power and energy of a nation be concentrated, poverty, with all the calamities in its train, exists in due proportion. Bread, on which the humbler classes mainly subsisted in the city; soap, by whose agency the females pursued their avocations on the river; coffee and

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V.

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sugar, which cheered their spirits or quenched their thirst; the implements of artificial light, for nocturnal discharge of those labours which public agitation interrupted by day; and all those materials necessary either to maintain the life or to assuage the miseries of man, had recently been doubled in price. The discontent thus engendered in the humbler classes was increased by the lower adherents of royalty and nobility, whose discharged domestics—vicious by habit, vindictive from suffering, and desperate through want—congregated in the various sections, and arraigned the new institutions of the country as the source of a scarcity unknown in the days of the ancient monarchy. Between these discarded royalists and the lower order of Jacobins fierce altercations daily ensued, and terminated frequently in mutual violence, but oftener in menaces, petitions, and counter-protests to the commune, the club, and Convention, or in imprecations against aristocrats and alleged monopolists. By the first of these bodies their addresses were rejected, in consequence of tending to increase the prevailing disorder; but they were openly encouraged by the second, which proposed the penalty of death against all who refused the assignats at *par*, yet could suggest no other remedy for the public distress than a vain attempt to lessen the price of provisions by abstaining from their use, or the desperate course of procuring them by a compulsory loan from the rich. The legislature was distracted by various plans to alleviate the distress, or to avert the crisis; but meanwhile the scarcity and the desperation of the people daily increased, and a savage address by Marat, counselling pillage, roused them to frenzy. A multitude of infuriated women repaired to the hall of the Jacobins to bewail

their sufferings, and demand relief from the Convention; but checked by an unexpected obstacle from some of the members, who refused to concur in a violent petition, they sallied into the streets, were quickly joined by men equally ferocious, and assailing the provision marts, exacted their stores, first at a nominal price, and ultimately without requital. A small guard which interfered to repress the plunderers, was repulsed, and the devastation extended from street to street, while the Convention and municipality were deliberating on the means of suppressing the riot, and the factions in both were accusing each other as the cause of the calamity. Their efforts to arrest the tumult were vain as their attempts to avert it were idle. Money was voted to the commune for the purpose of purchasing provisions and re-selling them for a lesser price; but this concession only increased the fury of those who resolved to extort them without remuneration, and the pillage was not arrested until several hours had elapsed, and a powerful body of troops arrived to check the marauders. Measures of police were next day enacted to prevent like insurrections. Pache, the mayor, with Santerre, the commander of the Parisian guard, was placed at the bar of the Convention for hesitating to suppress, and Marat was re-impeached for exciting the tumult; but the sanguinary cynic again successfully hurled defiance at his accusers, and the others escaped in the confusion of the more momentous affairs which now engrossed the attention of the senate.

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1793.

5. Military misfortunes supervened on civil strife. The army was disorganized and in utter want of supplies. In Belgium the troops of Dumouriez were in the last stage of distress; his artillery destitute of horses, those of his cavalry dying by hunger, and the

Military
Reverses.

CHAP.
V.

1793.

State of
Belgium,Despotic
Conduct of
the French.

infantry compelled to resort to the wretched expedient of encircling their limbs in straw to protect them from the winter's inclemency. Desertion daily diminished the number of his troops, and the hostility of the natives threatened to destroy the few who adhered to their banners. On the entrance of the French into Belgium the inhabitants of that country were divided into three parties; the first of which comprised the nobles, clergy, and higher magistrates, who were attached to the Austrian sway and the preservation of feudal rights; the second consisting of an intermediate class, eager for the abrogation of these antiquated institutions, and to be relieved from their obnoxious burdens; while the third comprehended the serfs of the soil, who were plunged in abject ignorance, and yielded servile obedience to the voice of their lords, or the commands of their priests, even when raised to perpetuate their own degradation. With the first and last of these classes republicans could have no communion, the one being calculated only to excite hatred of human insolence, and the other contempt for human endurance. It was accordingly to the second that Dumouriez attached himself; and, on entering the country, he was hailed by the great majority of the nation as a deliverer, who came to substitute enlightened democracy for odious feudalism. But the exigencies of his army soon compelled him to forego a proclamation promising to protect persons and property, which he issued on his entrance. He acknowledged their national independence, but he assailed their individual interest, and forgot that in the masses of mankind patriotism, with every other principle, yields to avarice. The currency which he tendered in exchange for supplies was obnoxious to the inhabitants, both on

account of its precarious value, as well as its depreciation by forgery; and he soon found himself under the alternative of either enforcing its circulation, or of levying a loan from the clergy, under the doubtful guarantee of the republic's liquidation. Intelligence of his difficulties having been meanwhile conveyed to Paris, the Committee of Public Defence resolved to adopt each of these courses; and denouncing the revolution in Belgium as incomplete, despatched Jacobin emissaries to overturn the institutions of the country, to enforce the reception of French currency, and confiscate the property of the church as an indemnity for the expenses which the liberating army had incurred. Nations, as well as individuals, are generally more sensitive to attacks on their revenue than to wounds of their honour, and will often resist an assault on the one when all regard for the other is lost in degradation. The populace of the Belgian cities loudly denounced this incursion on their wealth; the peasants in the country as clamorously protested against the robbery of their churches and the spoliation of their priests. But the Jacobin commissioners persisted in their course, and by their misconduct the kingdom which Dumouriez originally entertained hopes of attaching to France, by a judicious reform of abuses, in return for the benefit its annexation would confer, was on the eve of insurrection to expel as foes those whom it so lately had welcomed as friends.*

CHAP.
V.

1793.

Its consequences.

6. In Holland and on the confines of the Rhine, Hostilities in Holland and on the Rhine. affairs were equally critical. The French having extended their lines too far for adequate defence, were doomed to the mortification of leaving them to the enemy in turn. The allies had rallied with vi-

* Thiers, iv. 10-25; Lacretelle, x. 270-275.

CHAP.
V.

1793.

Dumouriez's projected Invasion of Holland.

gour to prevent an invasion of Holland ; and their reaction was as successful as their retreat had been disastrous. Disgusted with the state of Belgium, Dumouriez returned to Paris for the purpose of accusing the Jacobin emissaries, as well as proposing a plan to regain, in a new field, the laurels he had lost by their acts in the old ; and though unsuccessful in obtaining their recall, his scheme for the invasion of Holland was accepted by the Committee of Defence, in which his friends the Girondists still predominated. Five hundred thousand men were voted for the army ; and as the present troops scarcely exceeded half that number,* it was decreed that all unmarried men between the ages of eighteen and forty-five should be placed at the disposal of the state, and that a new circulation of assignats, to the amount of £32,000,000, should be issued for their equipment.† By the exertions of Beurnonville, his former companion in arms, and present minister of war, reinforcements were quickly supplied ; and Dumouriez, with his accustomed ardour, set out for a scene of operations which harmonized more with his impetuous temper than the inactive occupation of Belgium. Triumphant already in imagination, he proposed to descend the Meuse by Venloo to Grave, whence he should proceed to Nimeguen, and thence advance on the Dutch metropolis ; but on arriving at Antwerp he altered his intentions, despatched his lieutenants, Valence, Miranda, and Dampierre, with divisions to occupy Maestricht and Venloo, while he proceeded in person, with twenty-five thousand men, to Moerdyck, between Berg-op-zoom and Breda, with the intention of crossing the channel of Bielbos, and coursing along the shore to Leyden and Amsterdam. This

* Thiers, iv. 31, 32.

† Ibid. p. 33.

new plan was bold even to rashness ; for though it promised more rapid advantages than the other in the event of success, it left the Meuse open to the Austrians, and exposed Belgium to the danger of a counter-invasion. But still he resolved to attempt it, confiding in the audacity of his scheme, and in the favour of that fortune which often realizes the most visionary, yet oftener dispels the fairest of human projects. Having accordingly despatched Miranda and Valence to besiege Venloo and Maestricht, with instructions to rally at Aix-le-chapelle and Liege, if discomfited, he quitted Belgium, entered Holland, and issued a proclamation, which professed friendship for the subjects, and enmity solely to the government, in the customary style of all invaders. At the outset he experienced more success than might have been anticipated from his inconsiderate project. Breda, a strong fortification, either by cowardice or by treachery, was surrendered to D'Arcon, his chief engineer, and Gertruydenberg opened its gates to another of his officers with equally ignominious alacrity. But while success attended his arms in one direction, reverses awaited them in another. Dumouriez himself, while attempting to pass the inlet of Bielbos, was repulsed by the vessels of the enemy and an English frigate. His own country, meanwhile, was exposed to two hundred thousand allied troops, who were advancing against it in various divisions ; and though their movements were marked by more caution, and distinguished by less vigour than the strength of such forces justified, their operations sufficed to repel the comparatively feeble battalions of the French. Miranda, an obstreperous South American, subsequently suspected of cow-

CHAP.
V.

1793.

Attempted
Feb. 17th.

March 4th.

CHAP.
V.

1793.

Defeated
March
12th.

Other Re-
verses.

Proceed-
ings in
Paris.

ardice, was compelled by the Archduke Charles to raise the siege of Maestricht; and Valence, as well as Dampierre, was repulsed by the bravery of the Austrians under the Prince of Saxe Coburg. Defeated in every quarter, the French retreated in disorder to Aix-le-chapelle, whence they fled to Liege, and with difficulty rallied at Namur, after losing the whole of their baggage. Dumouriez himself, by whom they expected to be extricated, had escaped without disaster, or been recalled into Belgium, nominally for the purpose of suppressing an impending insurrection of the inhabitants, but in reality to counteract the designs of the Jacobins, and, if possible, to avoid the ignominy of this inglorious campaign.* Such was the result of one cherished expedition; and other military events contributed to obscure the republican flag. Servan in vain attempted to support an army in the Pyrenees; and though Kellerman maintained his position on the Alps, Custine was disastrously expelled from Germany. On every side the present aspect of the campaign appeared dismal as its origin had been bright.†

7. The Girondists in Paris, with whom Dumouriez was now considered as allied, shared in the obloquy by which he was covered on account of his failure in Holland and his rupture with the Jacobin agents in Belgium. The Convention had previously been distracted by internal dissensions, and the Girondist motion for a departmental guard having been negatived, the senate was at present so completely overawed by the populace that many of the deputies proceeded with arms to the chamber. From this perilous emergency the Girondists foresaw no escape

* Thiers, iv. 26.

† Dumouriez, iii. 350, *et sequent*; Jomini, iii. 85-100.

except in a dissolution of the assembly; a measure which the Jacobins opposed, in consequence of apprehending defeat from the preponderance of their opponents in the provinces. Aware of the rural influence which the former retained, the violent revolutionists of Paris demanded their expulsion from the legislative hall; but Robespierre and the leading Mountainists still shrank from attacking the national representatives, and trusted for a less dangerous victory to the superior power they possessed in the cities. While both parties were thus equipoised and mutually embarrassed, the intelligence of Dumouriez's disasters turned the beam in favour of the Jacobins, whose energy in moments of peril invariably triumphed over the irresolution of the others. They immediately proposed vigorous measures to repel the national danger from without, and at the same time to crush their antagonists within. Every place of public recreation was closed, and a black flag unfurled at the town-hall, as a symbol of the country's danger. On the motion of Danton, thirty thousand men were raised in Paris to combat external enemies, and a new revolutionary tribunal, from whose sentence there lay no appeal, was appointed to exterminate internal foes. Against the last proposition, pregnant with danger designed for themselves, the Girondists protested, but protested in vain: their adversaries succeeded in nominating a court, consisting of a jury, five judges, a public accuser, and two assistants, endowed with arbitrary and irrevocable power. A numerous body of armed Jacobins proceeded to the chamber, and, thus supported, the Mountainists followed up their decrees by others, to tax the rich for the equipment of the troops, and to establish itinerant tribunals for the extirpation of

New Revolutionary
Tribunal.

CHAP.
V.

1793.

Insurrec-
tion on
10th of
March.

their provincial opponents. But despotic as these proceedings were, they failed to satisfy the extreme revolutionists. The ministry was still in possession of their adversaries; and though exclusion from the chamber, with the interference of committees, reduced ministers to a cipheral condition, the Jacobins panted to possess in name that power which they had long enjoyed in reality. Cambaceres, a Mountainist, now as conspicuous for violent opinions as he subsequently was for sensual pleasures, demanded a re-organization of office; and though his motion was momentarily adjourned, the approbation which hailed it within the walls of the legislature was prophetic of eventual triumph. By the fiercer demagogues without, the proposal was received with still greater enthusiasm, and they resolved to extort it by a renewal of the insurrection, so successful before. The sections of Paris, which were now abandoned to the most furious of the populace, again assembled in uproarious deliberation: eighteen of their leaders passed a resolution for the summary expulsion of deputies from the legislative chamber, as well as for the exclusive concentration of power in the subjugated department of the Seine; and determined to proceed in a body to the Convention for the purpose of enforcing their behests. The barriers were accordingly closed as a prelude to insurrection; an armed multitude proceeded in disorderly array to the Jacobin club, and thence to the city hall, with the intention of marching on the senate. The danger was great; a crisis was imminent; the Convention in a state of anxious suspense. Most of the Girondists, considering their death contemplated, had retired from the chamber, and sought shelter in Petion's house; but forty of the party, animated by a nobler

spirit, repaired with arms to the hall, resolved, on the first indication of attack, to assail the Mountain and avenge their ruin in the blood of their foes. The Jacobins, on the other side, were inspired with the same resolution; and during the greater part of the night both factions sat on the benches in ominous silence, ready on the first alarm to engage in deadly conflict. All was prepared, and an elemental tempest increased the terror of the scene; but the fury of nature averted the violence of man. Approaching a window and observing the torrents which descended from the sky, Petion, who well knew the national idiosyncrasy, calmly remarked, "To-night there will be no insurrection;" and his prediction was confirmed. The storm scattered most of the motley insurgents; and Beurnonville, the war minister, having collected some troops, quickly dispersed the few who remained. The enlightened republicans for the present escaped; the Convention, after confirming the revolutionary tribunal, adjourned; and all parties—the Girondists with truth, the Jacobins with doubtful sincerity—disavowed the abortive attempt.*

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V.

1793.

8. The capital had scarcely recovered from this shock of conspiracy, when it was thrown into fresh commotion by the intelligence of renewed defeat and disaffection on the part of the principal republican commander. Undepressed by defeat, Dumouriez, on returning from Holland, resolved to employ rigorous measures towards his personal enemies in Belgium, as well as assume offensive against his country's foes; and in the ardour with which he commenced these designs he at first experienced his wonted success. Assailing the Jacobin emissaries, he repelled their assumptions, repressed their exactions. The vigour

Dumouriez's Disaffection.

* Lacretelle, x. 311-314; Thiers, iv. 90-94.

CHAP. V. which he thus displayed raised the esteem and allayed
1793. the rising insurrection of the Belgians; but it proportionally excited the resentment of the extreme revolutionists in France, who revenged this persecution of their brethren abroad, by arraigning at home the conduct of the persecutor. In Paris he was daily accused of royalism, in consequence of some commiseration which, during his recent visit to the metropolis, he had expressed for the king, and of treachery, for permitting the passage of the Prussians through the forest of Argonne. In every act of his past career treason was now discovered by those of whom he had so lately been an idol. Yet heedless of their imprecations, Dumouriez persisted in his course, and was still triumphant over the foes to whom he was destined soon to succumb. Elated by the arrogance which success so frequently inspires, he addressed to the Convention a letter, denouncing in strains so haughty the conduct of the Jacobins, both at home and abroad, that the Committee of Defence, to whom it was transmitted, temporarily suppressed its publication, and despatched Danton to exert his influence with the general, for the purpose of inducing him to retract the obnoxious document. But disgusted with his inglorious position in Belgium, where his relation to the Jacobins resembled that of the war-horse with the wolves—the impetuosity of the fiery steed at first baffling his ferocious pursuers, yet eventually yielding to their ceaseless pace—Dumouriez had, before the friendly envoy's arrival, quitted his quarters at Louvain, rallied his forces, and having obtained over the allies some unimportant advantages, determined on reanimating his followers by another general engagement. Dividing his army into three detachments, he advanced with the centre against the

heights of Halle, where the Austrians maintained a strong position, while his right and left were despatched, under the command of Valence and Miranda, to outflank the enemy and preserve a communication open for the relief of the troops discomfited in Holland. Victory, however, had now deserted his banner; the right and central divisions, which acted simultaneously, were repulsed in every attack; and, after two unsuccessful attempts on the village of Neerwinde, forced to retire, leaving its streets blocked up with the bodies of the slain. As the republicans retreated the Austrian cavalry followed to complete the repulse; but Dumouriez rallied his men, and, supported by the artillery, they withstood the onset. A fierce contest ensued, and the French ultimately remained in possession of the ensanguined field, though, in common with the enemy, they sustained a fearful carnage: yet having learned in the course of the night that Miranda had, in the interval, been completely defeated, Dumouriez was next morning compelled to retire; and, notwithstanding the ability he displayed in retreating, was subjected to a still greater loss, amounting, in all, to five thousand killed, while twice that number were either captured by the Imperialists, or fled as deserters.* A truce with the Austrian officer, Mack, alone saved the others from destruction, and enabled Dumouriez to regain Louvain, where he had an interview with Danton, whose advances, notwithstanding his defeat, he rejected with uncompromising hostility. Pursuing his retreat in disorder, he subsequently traversed and evacuated Brussels, and at Ath completed his disgrace, by entering into a treasonable arrangement with the enemy. By this stipulation

CHAP.
V.

1793.

Battle of
Neerwinde
March 18th
and 19th.

Defeat of
the French.

March
22nd.

27th.

* Jomini, iii. 106-117; Toulangeon, iii. 279-293.

CHAP. V. he agreed to abandon Belgium, and in common with the Austrians, march upon Paris, to overturn the Convention, restore the monarchical constitution of 1791, place the Duke of Chartres on the throne, and destroy those republican institutions, which he had long viewed with hostility, and was now resolved to subvert.*

Treason of
Dumou-
riez.

Acts
against
Dumou-
riez.

9. The alarm produced in the capital by Dumouriez's defeat, yielded to the indignation raised by his defection. His obnoxious letter to the Convention, previously suppressed by his friends in the Committee of Defence, was now laid before the chamber, with another, in which his tone grew haughty as his fortunes fell. Danton in vain endeavoured to save, and with difficulty escaped impeachment for protecting the traitor. On the motion of Robespierre, the disaffected general was ordered to appear before the legislature; and four commissioners, attended by the minister of war, were despatched to conduct him to the bar: but Dumouriez received them with contemptuous defiance, refused to obey the injunction; and when they attempted to enforce it, seized and sent the whole deputation, except Beurnonville, as prisoners to the Austrian camp. The Convention, on learning his contumacity, was equally resolute: a price was instantly set on his head, and Beurnonville appointed to supersede him. The relations of all the officers present when he arrested the commissioners were confined as hostages, and forty thousand men levied in the department of Paris to protect the capital, should he realize his threat of marching against it. His friends, the Girondists, were also involved in the punishment of his treachery. After a fierce altercation between them and the Jacobins,

* Lacretelle, x. 292; Mignet, i. 410.

a decree was passed to abolish the inviolability of deputies suspected of foreign confederacy, and to imprison the family of Orleans, whose elevation to the throne Dumouriez was supposed to contemplate. Acts so energetic quickly dispelled the resolution of the rebellious general, as well as the fortitude of his officers; and perceiving that those who had lately supported, were now as eager to desert him; that the troops of the line, whose affections he formerly possessed, were disposed to unite with the republican volunteers, to whom he was personally odious, and that the mutiny of the latter menaced him with instant danger, Dumouriez followed the example of Bouillé and Lafayette, by repairing with his staff, including two sons of the Duke of Orleans, to the Austrian head-quarters.* Doubtful of its policy, or despairing of its success, he there abandoned the design lately contemplated; atoned for his treason to his country, by refusing to appear in arms against it; obtained passports for a foreign land, and passed a long life in retirement, forgetful of a world by which he was forgotten.† Though he lived considerably beyond the allotted age of man, and witnessed the fall of that revolution whose nativity he nurtured, only thirty-six months of his existence were devoted to the service of France. Fifty years of his life were spent in the ignominious intrigues of a court; the remaining thirty, with that exception, in equally inglorious exile. Possessing talent without principle, and genius unsustained by resolution, he, in the first instance, had the good fortune to save,

CHAP.
V.

1793.

His Retirement.

Summary
of his
Career.

* Toulangeon, iii. 314-320.

† He proceeded to Switzerland and Germany, lived many years in England, and died, aged 85, near London, in 1823. In his retreat at Henley-on-Thames, he was noted for the conversational powers and fascinating manners which so many of his countrymen display in adversity.

CHAP. but possessed not the ability to guide, nor the means,
 V. though he had the inclination, to overturn the institutions of his country: and if, in his extenuation, it
 1793. be admitted that these were pernicious and deserving of destruction, it must be remembered, to his reproach, that he fostered while they promoted his advance, and assailed them only when they thwarted his ambition. In his various conditions, as a courtier, a statesman, and a warrior, he is in his military capacity alone entitled to the consideration of posterity; and in this respect he surpasses none of those commanders whom every age produces, and every generation foolishly admires and wisely forgets; whose future fame is silent though their present be loud, and their conquests empty as their achievements are noisy; who for a brief interval blaze in meteoric splendour, but leave neither a trace of their existence nor a track of their course.

Civil War. 10. Civil war in the west heightened the republic's misfortunes. The disturbances in that direction, which originally appeared to be only transient ebullitions of religious fervour, or the scarcely more lasting effects of rural famine, had, by the artifices of priests and emigrants, been converted into a struggle for monarchy, with which superstition and the more powerful impulse of interest were deeply blended. The former cry of the peasants for bread and the benefit of religion was now coupled with a demand for the restoration of the Bourbons; and several thousands were in open insurrection, prepared to attempt whatever deeds of desperation royalty might recommend or priestcraft should prompt. Orleans was in a state of revolt, and the whole district ready to rise in rebellion as soon as arms were found to equip, and leaders to conduct the

insurgents. From the Gironde to the Loire, from the Loire to the mouth of the Seine, a disposition equally hostile to the government prevailed. The departments in the vicinity of the Rhone, attached, like their representatives, to moderate republicanism, were likewise opposed to the violent measures of the Mountain; and resolved not only to support the principles, but, if need were, also to rise in defence of those Girondists, from whose intellectual brilliancy they received honour, and, by their own devotion, bestowed it in return.

CHAP.
V.
1793.

11. Despotism presents no charms either to the enlightened philosopher or to the illiterate peasant, whether it be contemplated by the calm eye of reason, or experienced in dread reality; but when the power of a nation is concentrated in the will of an individual, its might can be wielded with instant energy. In the bright days of Roman freedom the vigour of the state often was impaired by multiplied authorities; and in the dark hour of danger a dictator was invariably required to sway, and to save the republic. In times of tranquillity the people can best rule themselves, but in moments of peril a single hand will more safely guide them through the tempest; and repugnant as individual supremacy now was to France, some extreme authority appeared necessary for the country's salvation. The power of the Convention was too wide, that of the ministry too weak; and it was accordingly resolved to establish one of an intermediate nature. Yet as those who had latterly sacrificed a limited monarch on freedom's shrine, could not with consistency create an unrestricted dictator in his stead, they determined to form a body of nine members, who, under the name of Committee of Public Safety, should possess the

Creation of
Committee
of Public
Safety.

CHAP. power of controlling the executive, of suspending,
 V. when necessary, the decrees of the legislature, and
 1793. of instituting whatsoever measures were deemed
 desirable for the nation's external as well as internal
 welfare. To impart additional energy to this com-
 mittee, it was resolved that its deliberations should
 be secret; but to divest it of undue influence, its
 existence was in the first instance limited to a
 month's duration; and the various ministers were still
 charged with the execution of measures which it
 possessed only the power of originating.* Danton,
 Cambon, and Barrere were the leading members of
 this formidable body, which even under these re-
 strictions, was pregnant with destruction to liberty.
 The first endowed it with his daring energy, the
 second imparted financial ability, and the third
 threw around it a singular shield of descriptive elo-
 quence; the others were a weak and ignoble band,
 subservient and unscrupulous minions of their com-
 rades' will

The Com-
 mune's
 projected
 Committee
 of General
 Safety.

12. The Commune of Paris, which in all measures
 adopted by the Convention usually took the initiative,
 immediately followed its example by the formation
 of a corresponding committee. Rivalling the legis-
 lature in the capital, the municipality had long been
 ambitious of sharing its power in the provinces; and
 the present appeared a period propitious for the
 establishment of an union with all the corporations
 of the country. With this view, several of the more
 violent sections of Paris assembled and formed them-
 selves into a Central Committee of General Safety,
 with the intention of communicating with other re-
 publican municipalities, of overawing the Convention,
 and concerting a renewal of that insurrection which

* Thiers, iv. 140.

they had so often found successful. The attempt, CHAP. V. however, was premature. Robespierre and Marat strenuously opposed the designed revolt, which might 1793. possibly be productive of future advantage, but was assuredly attended with immediate danger; and though supported by Danton's significant silence, the scheme was discountenanced by the Jacobin club, and for the present fell to the ground.

13. Undeterred by this defeat, the sections next concocted a petition for the expulsion of the Girondists from the Convention; but while it circulated for subscription throughout the city, their design was counteracted by a violent debate in the chamber. Petion, whose revolutionary principles were now as moderate as they had formerly been rash, denounced the calumnious contents, and demanded the suppression of the document with a vehemence which his calm disposition rarely displayed. But Danton supported it with equal vigour; and Robespierre seized the opportunity to introduce one of those insidious harangues, on which, more than on open violence, he relied for the destruction of his foes. In a defamatory speech he recapitulated past, and detailed recent disasters; impeached the Girondists for Roland's profuse expenditure in office, for Lafayette's desertion and Dumouriez's defeat, for the passage of the Prussians at Argonne, and the defeat of Miranda in Holland; upbraided them as confederates in Dumouriez's design to place the house of Orleans on the throne, and concluded by proposing that all the accomplices of the general should be sent to the Revolutionary Tribunal. On the termination of this calumnious address, Vergniaud, the most eloquent and pure, but generally the most indolent of the deputies arraigned, instantly sprang to the bar,

Impeachment of the Girondists.

Speeches of Robespierre,

Vergniaud,

CHAP. and with all the glowing indignation of innocence,
V. repelled the slander, and reproached the slanderer.

1793. Stigmatizing the cowardice of Robespierre in periods of convulsion, he disavowed connexion with the profligate prince and faithless commander, both of whom, he represented, had been fostered by the Jacobins before they were recognized by the Girondists.

Gaudet. Gaudet, another member of the party scarcely inferior in brilliancy, succeeded; and concluded an oration equally animated by citing a sanguinary appeal of Marat to arms. The aspect of the day was now changed; the arraigners became the arraigned in their turn. The passions of the assembly, roused by these indignant harangues, became irrepressible on the repetition of the demagogue's words,

Marat's
Address.

"Citizens, in the government and the body of the Convention, the enemies of the revolution are to be found—let us arm, let us march against them;" and when Marat from his place in the chamber boldly exclaimed, "Yes, let us march," the whole members rose, and by a large majority decided that he should be arrested and subjected to that trial which had so often been threatened, and was now at last to be endured. In this moment of enthusiasm the representatives of the sections entered the Convention with their petition, demanding the expulsion of twenty-two legislative members; but the names of the leading Girondists thus proscribed had scarcely been enumerated ere the greater number of the deputies started up and desired to be enrolled in the list of proscription. The document was immediately pronounced calumnious; the legislature declared its resolution to receive no future impeachment of its members; the civic authorities, who, in support of the petition, appeared at the bar, were

Failure
of the
attempt.

received with a disdain which completed the rupture between the Commune and Convention : and the Girondists thus for the present escaped.*

CHAP.
V.

1793.

14. But the victory of the Girondists in the legislative chamber was quickly annulled by their defeat at the Revolutionary Tribunal, to which Marat had by their fiat been consigned. The Jacobins and extreme revolutionists of Paris, with equal energy and success, exerted their power in his aid ; and on his return in triumph from the court after an unanimous acquittal, the legislature was again profaned by popular violence. Surrounded by a furious body of armed men whom inebriation had severed from the restrictions of decency, and of females equally strangers to delicacy, he was crowned with a chaplet of oak, conducted to his place in the chamber, and presented to the president by a republican volunteer, who, brandishing a hatchet before the terrified legislators, fiercely declared that "before a hair of Marat were injured the head of the *Sapeur Pompeur* should fall."† "Citizen president," exclaimed this violent supporter, "we bring you the brave Marat, who has always been found the friend of the people, as the people will always be his ;"‡ and concluded by demanding permission for the crowd to march through the chamber ; a request which the impatient assembly was alike unwilling to grant and unable to deny. In such circumstances a desire expressed is synonymous with leave conceded. Without waiting consent, the infuriated multitude instantly burst into the hall, rushed to the benches which the Girondists and members of the Plain had quitted in terror or disgust, and replaced their idol on his seat in the Mountain, from

Trial and
Acquittal
of Marat.

* Lacretelle, x. 338-366.

† Ibid., x. 333, 334.

‡ Thiers, iv. 166.

CHAP. which, after receiving the congratulation of his friends,
 V. and delivering a complacent eulogy on the purity
 1793. of his heart, he withdrew to complete his triumph in
 the hall of the Jacobins, where the same disorderly
 scene was renewed. In the intoxication of his joy,
 or the exuberance of his vanity, Marat there under-
 took to address the ministry for the removal of his
 opponents from office ; and when Robespierre, whose
 jealousy was aroused by his colleague's elevation,
 attempted to divert this design by representing the
 contamination of such intercourse, he modestly re-
 plied that " a patriot so pure as himself might safely
 communicate with the devil."*

Civil War
 in La
 Vendée.

Character
 of the
 Peasants.

15. While such was the state of affairs in the
 capital, the alarming condition of the country
 afforded the Committee of Public Safety ample
 employment. Within a few days of its appoint-
 ment, intelligence arrived of the outburst of that
 civil tempest which had long been impending. The
 insurgents in the west had become organized, and,
 under various leaders, traversed the country with
 armies ten or twenty thousand strong, carrying dis-
 may and devastation into many a peaceful hamlet
 and tranquil plain, where war and its crimes had
 long been unknown. Combining many of the virtues
 attached to rusticity, with still more of the vices in-
 herent in ignorance ; naturally simple, and habitually
 superstitious ; hardy from the pursuit of a pastoral
 life, yet enthralled by the narrow sentiments it so
 frequently nurtures ; bold from inurement to the
 dangers of the chase, but brutalized by the coarseness
 it is apt to engender ; attached to royalty from im-
 memorial rote, and to religion from antiquated

* " *Un patriot aussi pur que moi pourrait communiquer avec le diable.*"—
 Thiers, iv. 167.

custom,—these intrepid peasants were ready to sally out on whatever excursion their royalist leaders might recommend, or their ejected priests should dictate. CHAP.
V.
1793.

Leaving their homes with scarcely any preparation of provisions or arms beyond those required for the duties or the pleasures of the field, they ranged the country in marauding bands, bearing destruction wherever they appeared. But as forces so irregular are more ready to essay than to endure the danger of military operations, they generally returned as soon as their bread was exhausted, or their booty—usually ammunition—secured ; and though their excursions were rarely protracted beyond a few days, yet they were not the less destructive ; as in that short period the plunderers traversed extensive districts, which they swept with the violence and rapidity of a whirlwind ; nor the less dangerous, as the union of individual advantage with religious principles and royalist sentiments, threatened to render them enduring. Other circumstances contributed to prolong the struggle. The nature of the ground—an extensive plain intersected by woods and water—was well adapted for the species of warfare in which peasants excel, and equally unfavourable to the regular troops employed to oppose them. Their mode of fighting—more analogous to the habits of the savage than of civilized life—was also calculated to protract hostilities, as it was oftener marked by the vindictive feeling of private foes than by the generous emotions of a public enemy, and rendered its followers alike incapable of exercising, and unworthy of receiving mercy. Sheltered by a tree or a thicket, the first indication of the insurgents' presence was a shower of musketry discharged with aim secret, steady, and unerring ; and when the enemy was defeated or dis-

Their
Customs.

Face of the
country.

Their
cowardly
Warfare.

CHAP. ordered by the unseen attack, they muttered a prayer,
V. made a sign of the cross,* rushed from their recesses,

1793. and with bludgeons either completed the barbarous slaughter, or if the foe were too numerous for assault, they with impunity maintained a destructive fire from their sylvan retreats. If repulsed, they, by their knowledge of the ground, easily escaped through intricacies of the woods, or passes in the marshes, unknown to their pursuers; if victorious, as more frequently happened, they disappeared with scarce less alacrity, after securing the arms of their opponents, which in the first instance constituted the chief object of their plunder. Money, however, soon became a subject of desire; and on their return home to divide the booty, one share was allotted to their rural lords—whose feudal imposts, though abolished by the revolution, they yet continued to pay; and another to their ejected priests, whose sway they still obeyed with all the degrading devotion natural to rustic ignorance. The interest of these superiors being thus combined with their passion for royalty and profession of religion, they in turn embarked with ardour in the struggle; and the peasants becoming bold by frequent success, as well as cruel from inurement to blood, were ready to engage in the more extensive designs which their leaders—rendered desperate by the formidable preparations for their punishment, and excited by the intrigues of the emigrants, or impelled by their own feelings of loyalty which the death of the king failed to dispel,—now entertained to carry their devastation over a wider range, and to destroy all opposed to them either in political or in religious creed. Several thousand insurgents, under Cathelineau, a wag-

Their
 Seigneurs
 and Priests.

Their
 Leaders,
 Cathelineau,

* Alison, ii. 227; and Larochejacquelein, *Mem. de, &c.*, p. 36.

goner, had recently extended their ravages to the towns from the plains, and successfully attacked various republican outposts, from which they obtained a considerable supply of muskets, with some pieces of artillery. Under Gaston, another leader, who had previously pursued the unwarlike avocation of a barber, a similar force evinced a still more daring spirit; and having subdued a body of raw republican troops, barbarously massacred all their prisoners, three hundred of whom they shot in companies of twenty or thirty by the side of a ditch,* that the place where the wretched victims fell might save their assassins from the trouble of a sepulture. But all the insurgent commanders were not thus ignoble in rank and ignominious in nature. In La Vendee, where the first decisive action occurred, and which, in consequence, conferred a name on the whole civil war, there were several chiefs of elevated birth, and possessed of a chivalrous bearing, which often alleviated the horrors, and, in some degree, redeemed the guilt of intestine strife. Here were to be found a Beauchamps, who recalled the recollection of Bayard for courage unstained by crime,† and Larochejacquelein, the representative of a noble family, whose dauntless courage had, in the twenty-first year of his age, elevated him to the rank of generalissimo. The conduct of the former has, by one word, been eloquently described as exempt alike from fear and reproach; but in brilliancy it was surpassed by that of the latter, whose contemplative disposition and refined humanity were not inferior to the valour he displayed when he led his followers to battle, with the inspiring cry, "If I advance, follow; if I

CHAP.
V.

1793.

Gaston,

Beau-
champs,Laroche-
jacquelein,

* Thiers, iv. 187.

† Chateaubriand, "De la Vendee," Œuvres, iv. 670; Paris, 1837.

CHAP. retreat, kill ; if I fall, avenge me." In this number
 V. also must be included D'Elbée, a brave but bigoted
 1793. naval officer, and Lescure, a young yet melancholy
 D'Elbée, hero, who took the sacrament every week.* These,
 Lescure, with a plebeian leader, named Charette, origi-
 and Cha- nally a gunsmith, and, though his character was
 rette. stained by cruelty, the ablest of the band, frequently
 mustered armies fifteen or twenty thousand strong,
 Their and not only defied the republican troops but
 Victories. menaced their strongest towns. Twelve hundred of
 the revolutionary soldiers, under the command of
 General Vertueil, had already been defeated with the
 loss of nine pieces of artillery. Thouars, a strong
 town, had yielded to the bravery of Larochejacquelein,
 aided by the cowardice of Quétineau, its defender ;†
 and Nantes, with other republican cities, was threat-
 ened with a similar fate. Alarming as these events
 were, the intelligence from other parts of the country
 Insurrec- was still more disastrous. Lyons, Marseilles, and
 tionary the chief towns of the south, which, at first, received
 disposition of Lyons, the revolution with rapture, were now in open revolt
 Marseilles, against the Jacobinical proconsuls who sought to
 and other introduce within their previously peaceful walls re-
 Towns. volutionary tribunals, and proscription with all the
 terrors in its train. Bourdeaux, Rouen, and the
 towns of Normandy and Bretagne, whose inhabitants
 remained attached to monarchical institutions, were
 on the eve of insurrection ; and the whole nation ap-
 peared ready to rise against the government, either
 in consequence of royalist reaction or detestation of
 republican tyranny. Despatches from the army on
 the frontiers were equally dismal. Dampierre, re-

* Chateaubriand, " De la Vendée," Œuvres, iv. 670 ; Paris, 1837.

† Thiers, iv. 189.

cently appointed to succeed Dumouriez, had already been defeated and slain in battle. CHAP.
V.

16. Urgent as the danger was, the bold revolutionists of Paris evinced no symptom of defeat nor dismay. As soon as intelligence of the Vendean insurrection reached the metropolis the abolished committee of the sections was revived, not indeed in name, but in stern reality. The municipality proposed to raise an army in the city, and march in a body against the rebellious province; to levy a forced loan from the rich, and indulge, by new proscriptions, the passions of the poor. When information arrived of the threatened revolt in the South, the energy of the commune was redoubled, and imparted to the Convention and all the powers in the state. The judgment of the legislature was indeed necessary to guide the zeal of the civic authorities, who, in their eagerness to despatch an army against the insurgent departments, proposed the most preposterous schemes; at one moment recommending that all the menials in the city should march to the scene of war, accompanied by the various public bodies; and in another, that the carriages of the wealthy should be seized for the conveyance of the troops. As in all periods of danger, while resolutely preparing to meet avowed public enemies, they also determined to destroy alleged secret foes. While the Convention renewed the Committee of Public Safety to concert means of national defence, the commune ordered two armies to be levied; one to proceed against the provincial insurgents, the other to act against the disaffected in Paris, comprehending, amongst the latter, the Girondists, whose death was now openly demanded by the furious females of the city. On their side, however, the menaced deputies were not without

1793.

Proceed-
ings in
Paris.Acts of the
Commune.

CHAP. support. In imitation of the metropolis the depart-
 V. ment of Bourdeaux offered to raise two armies, with
 1793. one of which it proposed to combat the rebels of La
 Vendee, and with the second to crush the anarchists
 in Paris. While externally the supporters of
 Of the Con- each party made these exertions, their representa-
 vention. tives were equally excited in the legislative hall,
 where both daily appeared in arms, and spent in
 private recrimination the time which should have
 been devoted to the public emergency. Each fiercely
 accused the other of the nation's calamities; the
 Mountain supplying by violence all that it wanted
 in numbers or in reason. Its opponents, supported
 by the members of the Plain, temporarily succeeded
 in the appointment of a committee to investigate the
 cause of the disasters; but this legislative tribunal
 was immediately counteracted by a similar body in
 the city, where a Central Revolutionary Committee
 was immediately created by the commune, to oppose
 the Convention's Committee of Twelve, and as quickly
 proceeded to act with a violence previously unknown.
 Under this civic authority the most atrocious mea-
 sures were daily propounded; the destruction of the
 Girondists was insufficient to satisfy its thirst for
 blood; one of its sanguinary members demanded
 that the heads of three hundred should fall; and his
 associates, instead of shrinking from the proposal,
 expelled another for resisting the demand; * but the
 design, on gaining publicity, excited aversion so
 general that the committee endeavoured to shroud
 their future proceedings in secrecy, dark as their
 own imaginations.

Its suppres- 17. A body so atrocious as this municipal com-
 sion. mittee could not escape the visitation of a legislature

* Thiers, iv. 240.

where humanity and civilization in even the least degree remained. It was accordingly denounced to the Convention, which reprimanded Pache for attending its meeting in his official capacity, and subjected the more violent members to imprisonment. But this course aroused the indignation of the commune and sections, who immediately addressed a petition to the chamber for the liberation of the prisoners and the abrogation of the Committee of Twelve, by whose instigation they were punished. On its reception a violent debate ensued in the senate, in the course of which, when rational arguments failed, the opposing parties threatened to try the more effective power of blows, and a fierce Jacobin, named Legendre, contemplated tearing his adversary by force from the bar. He was restrained; but the Girondists soon discovered the inefficacy of reason when opposed by force. A band of lawless citizens, at this moment bursting into the hall, completed the disorder and terminated the debate. Overawed by their menaces, or outnumbered by their votes—which, mingling with the senators, they freely gave—the Convention passed a decree for the enlargement of the popular idols, as well as for the committee's dissolution; and though the Girondists next day re-established the tribunal, they were constrained to acquiesce in the discharge of the prisoners. But this compromise was rejected by the commune, whose animosity, unallayed by the partial concession, was increased by the intemperate terms which Isnard, an eloquent Girondist who occupied the chair, employed in the course of an interview. "Magistrates," said he, in answer to a municipal address, "it is indispensable that you should listen to important truths. France has confided her representatives to your city,

CHAP.
V.

1793.

Conse-
quences of.

CHAP.
V.

1793.

Insurrec-
tion on 31st
of May.

and she expects they shall remain in safety within its bosom. If the legislature is violated by another of those insurrections of which you have been the last to warn us, I declare to you, in the name of the republic, that Paris shall feel the vengeance of France, and her name be erased from the list of cities." * The injudicious speech of Garat, the minister of the interior—who attempted to appease the democrats by extenuating their violence—increased the insolence of the commune; and Herault Sechelles, a Jacobin who had succeeded to the presidential chair, still more rashly ministered to their fury by declaring that "the force of reason and the people were invariably the same."† Those who descend to flatter a multitude in a career of crime, instead of quelling its violence, only, by nurturing its vanity, stimulate its rage. This weak subserviency was followed by its natural result. On the morning of the 31st of May the long impending insurrection burst forth; preceded by the sound of the tocsin, the barricade of the barriers, and other symbols of revolt, on the evening before. The sections of the city, accompanied by envoys from the revolutionary committee, marched to the town-hall, deposed the authorities, and substituted creatures of their own instead. But this act was only temporary, and committed solely for the purpose of restoring the ejected members with powers more extensive than ever. The late commune was quickly reinstated, and Henriot, a turbulent, unprincipled revolutionist of the lowest grade, appointed commander of Paris. The aid of the populace was secured by a largess of two francs a day to each citizen who attended meetings of the sections; a recompense which rendered the profes-

* *Moniteur*, Seance du 28 Mai, 1793.

† *Ibid.*

sion of patriotism lucrative, as the wages of honest labour scarcely equalled two-thirds of the amount. CHAP.
V.
Having completed their arrangements, the insurgents repaired to the Convention in a body eighty thousand strong; and their leaders presented themselves at the bar, nominally with a petition for the abolition of the obnoxious committee, but in reality prepared to extort their demand. Violence, however, was unnecessary; the enfeebled legislature, though supported by three of the sections, rapidly submitted. The populace again mingling with the Mountain, and the Girondists a second time retreating in dismay, their Committee of Twelve was suppressed; and the rioters retired in company with the violated senators, who participated in a procession through the principal streets, illuminated to commemorate their own degradation.* 1793.

18. But this moral insurrection (for so it was designated) remained incomplete without the exertion of physical force; the commune considering its triumph imperfect while the proscribed Girondists retained their seats in the Convention. The municipal authorities, two days subsequently, again repaired to the chamber in still more imposing array; presented another nominal petition, but actual command, for the expulsion of these deputies, in terms of insolence heightened by their recent success; and, when the assembly hesitated on a second concession to violence, they contemptuously threw off the feeble mask, and exchanged language of hypocritical intreaty for accents of undisguised menace. "The people have not risen to hear idle phrases,"† was Henriot's reply to the expostulation of the pre- Insurrection on 2nd of June.

* Lacretelle, x. 356-364; Thiers, iv. 256-260.

† Mignet, i. 436.

CHAP.
V.

1793.

sident; and a moment's survey convinced even the boldest in the legislature how completely they were at the mercy of the populace. Outside the walls, the rebellious commander surrounded the senate with the armed sections of the city, whom Marat, the petrel of the approaching strife, again sounding the alarum bell in person, had congregated in numbers formidable as before; and though only a portion of these were prepared to assail the first and last emblem of legal power in the state, the apathy of the others was equally fatal to liberty. The legislative freedom of the deputies had long disappeared; and of the loss of personal liberty they were now convinced by their frustrated effort to quit the disorderly scene. Several of the members, on attempting to escape, were abruptly driven back to the hall; and when their president, Sechelles, with the whole of the assembly, endeavoured to retire, in the delusion that their motions still were free, the multitude's resistance instantly revealed that henceforth they were the slaves of the power they had raised. "Give way to the Convention," said the legislative chief to Henriot, who had resumed command of the guard: "You shall not retire till the twenty-two are expelled," was the demagogue's contemptuous reply. "Seize the traitor!" exclaimed the outraged senator to the soldiers: "Canoneers! to your guns," the other briefly rejoined; and the command was immediately obeyed. The deputies were forced to re-enter the hall, and pass a decree for the arrest of the Girondists, whose fate was decided by the Mountain alone; the Plain having refused to vote under intimidation, and the few enlightened republicans present, not included in the list, being destitute of resolution or of power to avert the fate of their asso-

Expulsion
of the Gi-
rondists.

ciates.* The greater part of the devoted deputies were in the meanwhile sheltered in a distant part of the city, and finding future efforts vain, had resolved to abandon the chamber on condition that an equal number of their opponents should simultaneously withdraw; a stipulation which Danton accepted, but Robespierre, with the leading members of the Mountain, rejected.† Compromise having failed, irresolution seized, and destroyed the distracted band as its prey. The majority proposed retreat to the provinces, with the intention of raising the country against the lawless capital; a few, including Petion, Buzot, and Gensonnè, determined on passive submission to their fate; and a still smaller number, in which the names of Languinai and Barbaroux alone ultimately appeared, resolved to resist or to die, as in such circumstances beseems senators at their post. But the pusillanimous conduct of the one, and the gallant courage of the other, were alike ineffectual to save them, or to prolong the brief space which separates proscription from the scaffold; and this party, so intellectual but irresolute, profound yet inexperienced, philosophic though incompetent, naturally enthusiastic and consequently indiscreet—who subverted a throne by their brilliancy, and sacrificed themselves to a virtuous abhorrence of blood—thus succumbed to democracy without a struggle. More conversant with books than with men; attached to the sentiments of the ancient world rather than to the opinions of the modern; perfect in theory but imbecile in practice, they proved that virtue, however pure, and integrity, howsoever inflexible, are unfit to cope with unhesitating vigour and unscrupulous activity, in the affairs of life. Beautiful in the

CHAP.
V.

1793.

Their Con-
duct,and Cha-
racter.

* Toulangeon, iii. 420-431; Mignet, i. 430-438. † Thiers, iv. 289.

CHAP. abstract, but crude in detail, their principles, how
V. worthy soever of admiration, and capable of appli-
1793. cation in times of primeval simplicity and Utopian
tranquillity, were equally puerile and misplaced in
an era of revolutionary storm. Yet these, inadequate
as they were, might have safely steered the state
bark, though not assuaged the tempest, if maintained
with energy; but the vacillation of the Girondists
was more fatal to the cause of order than even the
violence of the Jacobins. With them terminated
the reign of the moderate or intermediate classes of
society; the rule of the lowest succeeded, and
liberty was dragged headlong in their fall.

CHAPTER VI.

REVOLUTIONARY GOVERNMENT, FROM THE EXPULSION OF THE GIRONDISTS,
TILL THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE REIGN OF TERROR.

1. Democratic Government.—2. Revolutionary Acts in Paris.—3. Rebellion in the Provinces.—4. Foreign Hostilities; with Holland; on the Rhine; in Spain; with Piedmont; Danger of the Republic; Imbecility of the Allies; Energy of the Vendéans; Decline of the Confederates.—5. Proceedings in Paris.—6. The New Constitution.—7. Defeat of the Confederates.—8. Murder of Marat.—9. Consequences of his Death; Increase of Robespierre's Power; his Designs; Character of his Coadjutors, St. Just, Couthon, and St. André.—10. State of the Country; Financial Distress; its Causes, Excessive Issue, Former Debts, Conduct of Foreign Powers and the Emigrants, Domestic Intrigues.—11. Consequences of Embarrassment.—12. Military Affairs; in La Vendée, in the South, the North; Fall of Mentz, Valenciennes and Condé; Consequences of.—13. Constitutional Festival of 1793.—14. Energetic Measures of Defence; Compulsory Loan from the Rich; Regulation of the Finances, and of Provisions; Establishment of the Maximum.—15. Revolutionary Vengeance, against the late Queen, the Duke of Orleans, the Royal Tombs, Defeated Commanders, La Vendée, and the English Government.—16. Military Affairs; Character of Carnot; his New Tactics; their Advantage and Disadvantage.—17. Success at Dunkirk and Hondtschoot; Defeat at Menin; Other Reverses, in Spain and the Pyrenees; Domestic Disasters; Insurrection of Lyons and Toulon.—18. Affairs in Paris; State of Parties, their Designs against the Convention; Conduct of the Committee of Public Safety; Despotism Established.—19. Observations.

1. A new order of affairs supervened; the dominion of the multitude, which an ancient philosopher has described as the worst,* though in a state of refinement it is the best species of sovereignty. But the present condition of France was unfit for such supremacy, which, howsoever desirable it may seem presently in reason, and be ultimately destined in reality, the imperfections of humanity and inequalities of intellect must long maintain as a hallucination in the minds of the sanguine, and a phantom in the dreams of the wise. Harmony and peace are fascinating in

CHAP.
VI.

1793.

Democra-
tic Govern-
ment.

* Aristotle; De Politico.

CHAP. VI. contemplation, and attractive in experience; but discord and contention form the history of life.

1793. 2. The triumph of the insurgents was followed by the wonted display of energy in the capital and opposition from the country. The ministers of foreign affairs and finance, Clavieres and Lebrun, suspected of attachment to Girondist principles, were ejected, arrested, and their places supplied by Deforgnes and Destournelles, two instruments of the Jacobin club. Five additional members were appointed to the Committee of Public Safety, which, besides being charged with the formation of a revolutionary army, and the more difficult task of raising funds for its support, was instructed to prepare a new constitution before the elapse of a week. Numerous other committees were also named—or those already existing re-organized by the dismissal of all but Jacobin members,—to control officials, conduct the correspondence of the state, and suppress that of the opposite party as well as the journals devoted to its cause. All these measures for the violation of private confidence and public freedom, with many others equally unscrupulous, were readily sanctioned by the Convention, which was now wholly governed by the Mountain; the moderate part and one-half of the Plain refusing to vote, while the other ignobly united with the conquerors.*

Rebellion in the Provinces. 3. The provinces meanwhile remained not passive spectators of these arbitrary acts. The Girondists, though extinct as a party in the capital, still possessed many adherents in the country, whither most of them had escaped since the recent insurrection. A few, indeed, scorned to seize the opportunity presented by the lenient custody in which they were for some days detained at their own habitations, after expulsion

* Mignet, i. 438-440; Thiers, v. 1-4.

from the legislature; and remained in Paris with the resolution of demonstrating in death their fidelity to those principles which in life they had advocated: but the greater number fled to concert measures of resistance or revenge; and so successful had their exertions been, that of the eighty-three departments of France, sixty or seventy were ready to raise, in support of moderate republicanism, that banner of insurrection, which the Vendéans had upreared for abrogated monarchy. Fifteen or twenty alone, comprising those in the north and vicinity of the Seine, supported the Convention: the various cities of the south and west were employed in forming a provincial senate, not only for purposes of local administration, but also to advance against that in the metropolis. Bourdeaux had already established an independent government under the name of Popular Committee of Public Safety, and demanded from the Convention explanations of the late revolution, as well as rallied the adjoining districts in a union to resist it while controlled by the Mountain. Toulouse, an ancient city, where royalist recollections yet stedfastly remained, had raised a body of several thousand men, and repudiated the republic's authority. The neighbouring provinces followed its example, by liberating the Convention's prisoners and imprisoning its agents. Grenoble threatened to arrest the furious proconsuls who had been sent to it in common with all the important towns of the country, and spread dismay wherever they appeared. Marseilles, where enthusiasm for the revolution until recently prevailed, and whose sons so lately inspired the noblest of its war songs, had established a popular tribunal for the trial of these minions of terror; and in all the other towns of France, except its northern shore, a fierce contest existed

CHAP.
VI.

1793.

CHAP. between the communes and the inhabitants, the former
 VI. of whom were, in general, devoted to the Jacobins,
 1793. and the other attached to Girondist principles. At
 Lyons, distinguished for the beauty of its manufactures, and the bravery of its men, one of which anarchy had almost extinguished—though the latter, violence cannot subdue,—a furious conflict had burst forth between these civic rivals, and, notwithstanding the interposition of the Convention's commissioners, it was not terminated until several hundreds were destroyed. Other influential cities were on the brink of like internal havoc, or ready to expend their fury against the capital and the few departments who adhered to its cause. On every side the Convention was menaced with danger, and had to contend against three-fourths of France, as well as Europe in arms.*

Foreign
 Hostilities,

With Hol-
 land,

On the
 Rhine.

4. The foreign relations of the republic were equally desperate. While defeated by the Vendean peasants, and menaced by the provincial confederates at home, the Convention's arms had been as unsuccessful abroad. Repulsed in Holland, where Dampierre had atoned for incompetency by a soldier's death, the remains of his army, under the temporary command of Lamarche, retreated in disorder to Valenciennes, closely pursued by the allies in irresistible force. The ill-concerted operations of the enemy, in whose camp not a man of genius was found, alone saved the discomfited French from destruction. After a congress at Antwerp between the Duke of York on the part of Britain, and the princes of Coburg and Orange on the side of Austria and Holland, the coalesced troops, instead of advancing into France, resolved to undertake the siege of Valenciennes and Condé, while the king of Prussia advanced in person

* Thiers, v. 1-10; Lacretelle, xi. 40-46.

to attempt that of Mentz. The first of these commanders being at the head of twenty thousand Hanoverians, and the others respectively leading bodies of forty and fifteen thousand men, the invested cities soon yielded to their arms, the former by assault, the latter to blockade: but the imbecility of the prince of Hohenloe, who dispersed an army of thirty thousand Prussians between Luxemburg, Namur, and Treves, and thus impaired his strength in proportion as he extended his line, for a time averted the fall of Mentz; though the town was exposed by the negligence of Custine, who had allowed the French armies of the Rhine and Moselle, respectively forty-five and thirty thousand strong, to be separated, as well as left a garrison of twenty thousand men, with a scanty supply of provisions, to be invested by a quadruple number; and when he afterwards succeeded in reuniting his forces, made a movement so futile that his troops were repulsed in disorder, and the unreleased fortress abandoned to its fate. On the side of Spain. hostilities had made less progress, but the little they had made was unpropitious for France. Ricardo, the Spanish general, advancing at the head of sixty thousand men to attack Perpignan and revive his country's claim on Rousillon, repulsed some powerful French detachments under Villot, and, April 15th. after menacing the whole frontier for several weeks, eventually attacked their camp, which, though bravely defended by the veteran Dagobert, was finally broken May 19th. up, and its troops routed to Perpignan, where they were exposed to a disastrous fire from their comrades in garrison, who, in the darkness of the night, supposed them foes. Even Piedmont—impotent as it was, in common with all the Italian states,—had prevailed against the republic. The French army on

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1793.

With Pied-
mont.

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Danger of
the Re-
public.Imbecility
of the
Allies.Energy of
the Ven-
deans.

that frontier, nearly twenty thousand strong, but ill-equipped and worse commanded, vainly attempted to acquire possession of Saorgio, the key to the occupation of Nice. After several fruitless efforts, it was, in the end, defeated by the Piedmontese, and driven beyond the Var in a state of total rout. Mortifying as these reverses were, they assumed an aspect still more dangerous, on contemplating the combinations for which they afforded scope. The army of Italy, while retreating from the victorious Piedmontese, was exposed to be attacked in rear by the insurgents of France, and to be assailed in flank by the cruisers of England. Spain, when in possession of Perpignan, might readily co-operate with the mountaineers of the Alps and the Pyrenees, whose hostility to the revolution was inferior in ferocity only to that displayed on the plains of La Vendee. The north was open to the allies if they chose to leave Mentz in their rear, and march upon Paris, while the Convention was threatened with revolt by the confederates of the south. On every side the republic was menaced with invasion from abroad and insurrection at home. But the Italians were irresolute, the Spanish inactive; the Austrians and Prussians adhered to the senile system of methodic movements, and hesitated to advance against an open country in front, while a fortress remained uncaptured behind; their leaders, Coburg and Hohenloe, were too cautious for enterprise, too slow for success; and the Duke of York was more fit to dictate drills, or devise equipments, than to conduct operations in the field, or lead an army to battle. The Vendean alone pursued their plans with the energy of men, and with the fortune that follows it. Strengthened by the acquisition of arms, and fortified by the pope's benedic-

tion,* they extended their ravages far and wide, devastated entire departments with fire and sword, and plunged the whole frontier in alarm. Elated by uninterrupted triumphs over successive republican commanders, they proclaimed the dauphin King of France by the title of Louis XVII., nominated the Count of Provence regent, appointed a governor to the provinces they had conquered, and hurled defiance and defeat on the Convention's disorderly levies. The confederates of the south, though they had established "a Central Assembly to resist oppression," and appointed a departmental general, were already the victims of disunion; the weak having withdrawn from opposition, overawed by the threats of the Convention; while the strong relaxed their efforts from a generous sympathy for their country, menaced on every side from the Rhine to the Pyrenees, from the Alps to the ocean.†

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1793.

Decline of
the Con-
federates.

5. The anarchists in the capital confronted these disasters with all the courage of despair; and opposed them by that determination which rarely fails the bold, however desperate be their condition, or indefensible their cause. Evincing no symptom of defeat or dismay, they fearlessly rejected all thoughts of a compromise; ordered a levy of three hundred thousand men to repel the foreign enemy in the north, and marched additional troops to repress the internal foe in the south. Having passed these resolutions for general defence, and employed innumerable committees to labour day and night for their completion, they next enacted measures of more special purport. The confederates were allowed three days for sub-

Proceed-
ings in
Paris.

* His envoy had recently performed the harmless ceremony of blessing their colours.—Thiers, v. 53.

† Jomini, iii. 163-174; Toulangeon, iv. 10-42.

CHAP. mission, and their general, Wimphen, a royalist in
VI. disguise,* was ordered to Paris on pain of outlaw.

1793. The deputies who had fled to the provinces were commanded to resume their seats under penalty of forfeiture, and their constituents threatened with the punishment of rebellion, in the event of resistance. The Committee of Public Safety imparted energy to all these measures in Paris, and additional proconsuls, armed with increased power, were despatched to enforce them in the country.

The new
Constitu-
tion.

6. An ancient Roman senate, when threatened with subversion by the Gauls, calmly passed to the discussion of some trivial enactment : the present French Convention displayed equal magnanimity, by proceeding with tranquillity to construct a new Constitution for a country that appeared on the verge of destruction. The form of government which the Committee of Public Safety hastily devised, and the legislature now as rapidly adopted, was one of those pure democracies which are most fitted to man in a state of primitive simplicity and mature refinement, but unfit for his protection in times of disaster. By its enactment, power was reposed solely in the people, who were not only acknowledged its only source, but alone intrusted with its exercise.† In them authority was inclusively vested, and the legislature was but the instrument of their will. As government, in the abstract, is, properly, but an infraction of individual right for general security, every Frenchman was considered a citizen equal in rights, and equally entitled to enact the laws which he was bound to obey. The citizens were divided into bodies of fifty thousand, each of which annually elected a representative, whose collective number constituted an assembly ;

* Thiers, v. 22.

† Mignet, ii. 13.

and the acts of this body acquired the force of law, unless, within a limited period, opposed by the original constituents. The administration was formed of twenty-four members, nominated by electors whom the primary assemblies chose, and the legislature selected from a larger number. This executive, one-half of which was annually renewed, possessed the privilege of nominating, and the power of directing the various ministers, generals, and officials of the state, but was responsible for their deeds.* Such was the democratic constitution of 1793, simple in structure, but incapable of strength in action; as, though it swept off all the trammels of the past, it failed to provide for the exigencies of the present. It was received with nearly equal unanimity by the Convention, the capital, and the country; but almost immediately suspended and never revived. Its promulgation, however, was momentarily beneficial; as, though productive of a transient tumult among the lower orders in Paris, to whom every form of government now was odious, it contributed to allay the excitement in the provinces, many of whose inhabitants, either distrusting the capacity of their leaders, or dismayed by the energy of the Convention, gladly seized the opportunity of reconciliation with the government, when the new charter was presented for their approbation.

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7. Most of the confederates gave in their adhesion to the republic when the new constitution was submitted to the provinces for confirmation; but the inhabitants of Lyons and Bretagne still resisted as men who recent injuries could not forget, and whose recent insurrection could not be forgotten. The former, as yet, held out with success, though reserved for a

Defeat of
the Con-
federates.

* Thiers, v. 60-64.

CHAP. display of republican vengeance, which—could man
VI. foresee his misery—might have led them to envy

1793. the fate of the others, whose hopes and fears were quickly terminated. Proceeding from their headquarters at Caen, the prescribed deputies, and those who adhered to their falling cause, encountered the Convention's troops in the neighbourhood of Vernon ;

July 15th. and though a trivial success at first attended their arms, two days witnessed the overthrow of their forces, and the annihilation of their power. The men submitted unconditionally ; the leaders sought safety in a disastrous flight ; and Petion, Barbaroux, Louvet, with others of the Girondists, having refused to concur in the royalist projects of Wimphen, their general, were soon pursued as fugitives through the departments which they lately led ; dependent, for a precarious existence, on those who were either unable or unwilling to relieve them, but still remaining faithful to their principles in the midst of misfortune, hostile though powerless, unconquered in spirit, though in arms subdued. This triumph over the chief of the insurgents was followed by the universal submission of the rest. The rebels of

July 29th. Lozere were simultaneously dispersed, and 30,000 of the Vendéans defeated by Canclaux, in an attack upon Nantes ; the victory in each instance being rendered more decisive by the capture of Charrier, the leader of the one, and the death of Cathelineau, the commander of the other.* A ray of fortune had

July 17th. also beamed on the banners of the republic abroad ; where an unexpected advantage over the Spanish general Ricardos revived the drooping spirits of the French.

Murder of
Marat.

8. While the revolutionists of Paris were rejoicing

* Larochejacquelein, pp. 153-174 ; Beauchamps, i. 238-253.

in this dawn of success, the loss of their principal idol plunged them in momentary grief. Of all the anarchists in the capital none had inspired in the country a hatred so deep and lasting as Marat. The daring courage of Danton impressed with involuntary respect even those who detested his principles, or abhorred his profligacy; and Robespierre's cruelty was still concealed by that mask of hypocrisy which is so often the veil of human turpitude, and so often triumphant in human affairs. But the sanguinary disposition of Marat daily revelled in ferocity that alike outraged decorum and defied concealment. Few had been so instrumental in persecuting the Girondists, and in the breasts of their partisans, none had excited a more indelible resentment. Among the most ardent of these was a young female named Charlotte Corday, in whom the charms of feminine beauty were gracefully mingled with the vigour of masculine intellect, and a tender affection for her family merged into a still deeper attachment to her country. Long resolved on sacrificing her life in its cause, she seized the moment when the recent loss of a lover, proscribed for his attachment to the Girondists, gave her private injuries to resent as well as public calamities to revenge; and fixing on Marat as alike the author of the one and the cause of the other, she set out for the metropolis, intent on his destruction. A letter from one of the Girondists who admired her lofty enthusiasm, but was ignorant of her dark design,* readily secured her admission to the ministry; and a specious complaint of public grievances as easily opened the portals of Marat—closed against compassion, but never shut to an accusing voice. "It is well," said he, as he

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* Thiers, v. 85.

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hastily surveyed, while reclining in his bath, the names of those she affected to impeach, "the guillotine shall exterminate them all;" but he had scarcely uttered the sanguinary threat, when, re-echoing his words, she plunged a knife into his breast; and ere his mistress in an adjoining chamber could fly to his feeble cry for aid, the murdered homicide was no more. Seized on the spot, his assassin was hurried before the Revolutionary Tribunal, whence she was in two days consigned to the guillotine, and, amid the silent admiration of the few,* but loud imprecations of the many, she submitted to her fate with the graceful modesty and undaunted fortitude, characteristic of her whole career. During her trial she absolved the Girondists, whose destruction, nevertheless, was accelerated by their supposed participation in the act, still more than by their undoubted share in the recent revolt; avowed her sole guilt, if guilt it were; and gloried, posterity may be disposed to think with justice, in the deed. Her victim was honoured with a public apotheosis, in which the president of the Convention and the leaders of the Commune vied with each other in extolling his patriotism and eulogizing his virtues: though impartial history, which sits in deliberate judgment on the acts of mankind, must doubt the one and deny the other; can extenuate his crimes solely on the supposition of insanity, and consider the atrocity of his life as diminished only by the misery of his death.†

* "Cato," said a bystander, "is nothing to her."

† And yet there must have existed some forgotten charm in the mind of this fanatic, or an unprecedented extent of depravity in the breasts of his countrymen, when we find one of their orators speaking thus over the remains of one, in whose dark career of crime posterity can scarcely distinguish a single ray of redeeming virtue,—“He is dead! the friend of the people is dead! dead by assassination! Let us pronounce no eulogy over his inanimate corpse. His eulogy is to be found in his conduct, his writings,

9. But in the revolutions of the world, the life of a man, howsoever high or humble, vicious or virtuous, is alike soon forgot. The only effect of Marat's death was to increase the power of Robespierre, and to diminish that of Danton, whose influence was already declining, in consequence of his neglect of the Jacobins. This formidable body, and the municipality of Paris, were now the chief powers in the state. The Convention had, since the ejection of the Girondists, maintained a gloomy silence, engaged in no debates, but tacitly confirmed the acts of the Committee of Public Safety, or the dictates of the Jacobin club, where all public measures were now discussed. The ministry was feeble in the last degree; Garat, who presided over domestic affairs, had, like Roland, become an object of Jacobin suspicion; and Bouchotte, the successor of Pache in the portfolio of war, imitated his predecessor's example in becoming their creature. The power of the commune was gradually restricted to municipal affairs, and measures of police; but that of the Jacobins daily increased. The Cordelier club, where Danton's influence was paramount, had succumbed to its gigantic rival; and in this omnipotent body,—which by means of its authority in Paris, and its innumerable ramifications in the country, monopolized the control of the republic—Robespierre's will was supreme. His affected gravity and natural severity, his assumed morality in public, though not exempt from frailty in private,* but above all, his

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1793.

Consequences of
his Death.Increase of
Robespierre's
Power.

his death, and his bloody bier. Citizens, wreath with flowers the pale body of Marat! He was our friend—the friend of the people; it was for them he lived, for them he died.”—(Thiers, v. 93.) Disinterest, in the midst of power and temptation, is the only extenuating trait that can be discerned in his character. At his death, only five francs were found in his possession; and the expense of his sepulture, as well as the support of his mistress, devolved on the state to whose service—or rather its destruction—his life had been devoted.

* Thiers, v. 116.

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1793.

His De-
signs.

deserved reputation for pecuniary incorruption, and his devoted assiduity to the club, rendered his word a dictate, and the strength of his supporters made that dictate a law. But though his vanity was daily fed by their homage, he could scarcely fail to feel the insecurity of his sway, or be ignorant that what popularity bestowed, its fleeting breath could dispel. He was, perhaps, also mortified by the reflection that his power was indirectly wielded; for though the club impelled the force, the Convention, by its Committee of Public Safety, struck the blow; and as the authority of the one was assumed by itself, whereas that of the other flowed from the country, the influence of the former must depend on violence, while that of the latter was founded on right. Wearied, therefore, of raising force which he applied not, and tired of forging bolts he never hurled; instigated also by his natural timidity, which prompted him to depend more on finesse than on force, his ambition was now directed into a new channel, as well as a wider range; and to indulge its inordinate desires, he resolved to re-invigorate the Convention, of which he already was a member, and the Committee of Public Safety, where he hoped soon to be. To accomplish the first of these objects he proceeded with the subtlety of the fox; in effecting the second he displayed the vigour of the wolf. In the instance of the one, his aim was necessarily protracted; but the approaching renewal of the Committee of Public Safety, afforded opportunity for the immediate achievement of the other. He accordingly exerted his power with equal activity and success: with the exception of Barrere, who was retained for his ready elocution,* all the members of the former committee were dismissed, and re-

* Thiers, v. 124.

placed, with one exception, by creatures of his own ; of whom the names of St. Just, Couthon, and St. André alone can be rescued by history from oblivion. The first of these was a youthful fanatic, even more disinterested than himself. Though scarcely twenty-five years of age, he was equally austere, simple, and sententious; bold, systematic, and inexorable. A man of action alike in the senate and the field, in the pursuit of his aim he resolutely braved the frowns of the one, and the dangers of the other ; pursued his course with inflexible firmness, heedless of either pity or remorse. Couthon, the second of Robespierre's new coadjutors, and formerly an advocate at Clermont, where previous to the revolution he enjoyed a reputation for gentleness and integrity,* was a zealot more pitiless still. A palsy, which paralyzed half his body, imbued him with no sympathy for the infirmities of others ; but with a bland aspect and dulcet voice he proposed measures of extermination from which humanity revolts. Jean Bon St. André, the last, had been a Protestant clergyman,† and was now chiefly conspicuous for the cunning, cowardice, and heartlessness of a degraded priest.

10. The condition of the country required all the vigour which the reinforced committee could impart. Surrounded by foreign enemies, and distracted by internal strife, the republic was destitute of those pecuniary resources which in modern days are indispensable for repelling hostilities abroad, or repressing them at home ; which have reduced war to a question of finance, and render a nation powerful in the field, in proportion to the plenitude of its coffers, rather than to the prowess of its citizens. The *assignats*, on which the government depended, were either

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1793.

His Co-
adjutors,
St. Just,

Couthon,

and St.
André.State of the
Country.Financial
Distress.

* Biographie Moderne.

† Ibid.

CHAP. VI. rejected by capitalists, notwithstanding rigid penalties against refusal; or received at a ruinous discount, in

1793. spite of the rigorous punishment of depreciation: for while the precious metals in every civilized country bear a nearly equal value, a revolutionary state will in vain attempt to render paper money equivalent to that real wealth, of which, even when based on capital, it is only the emblem; and though secured on the substantial properties of the church, and the valuable possessions of the emigrants, the republican notes were obviously uncertain so long as the stability of the government was doubtful. Legislative enactments were in vain employed to enforce their circulation as standard currency; and though six years in irons were decreed against recusants of the fictitious representative at its nominal rate, the differential value had gradually arisen from one to three: and six francs in *assignats* were now given for one in bullion. To support this enormous difference, an additional issue was requisite; and in proportion as they increased in quantity, they naturally diminished in worth. The ruinous result of this discrepancy might have been alleviated if every one had received *assignats* at the estimate they bore: but all who derived their revenue either from the soil, or from the state, were compelled to accept the paper money at its nominally high value; and being unable to exchange it except at its intrinsically low, they thus received only one-third, or a sixth part of their income, as the discount fluctuated. Excessive as the rate of exchange was, the republic's liabilities threatened to increase it; for the present government was charged not only with its own debts, but with all contracted prior to the revolution. *Assignats* issued by the late king and his predecessors, since the

Its Causes.

Excessive
Issues.

Former
Debts.

reign of Louis XIII., still roamed the financial marts; and bore a greater value, or returned a higher interest, than those emanating from the monarchy's subversion; and all these, on presentation to the treasury for payment, having been re-issued to meet instant necessities, instead of being cancelled as discharged bills of exchange, produced lasting embarrassment through the medium of temporary relief. The currency was also depreciated by foreign powers and the emigrants, either by design or by destitution: the former finding it alike advantageous and easy to embarrass an obnoxious republic, by obtaining possession of its paper at a discount so lucrative, and demanding payment in bullion through the ordinary channels of finance; and the necessities of the latter—few of whom were willing to support themselves by industry, still fewer able by intellect—compelling them to receive *assignats* for their lost property in France, how exorbitant soever the exchange. Legislative baseness—common equally in the best and worst of times—increased the disorder; several deputies were engaged in the infamous occupation of agitating the public funds for private gain,* and dishonourably speculated against their country through the medium of courtesans, with whom they prosecuted intrigues in illegal commerce, as well as lawless love.

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1793.

Conduct of
Foreign
Powers,
and the
Emigrants.Domestic
Intrigues.

11. Public poverty naturally produces private want. Financial embarrassment in a state is rarely unattended by commercial distress in the subject; for individual property is in the end dependent on general welfare. The necessities of the commonwealth are quickly reflected on commerce, and thence on agriculture in turn. Yet famine is engendered less by

Conse-
quences of
Embarrass-
ment.

* Thiers, v. 174.

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parsimony in the bounteous earth than by scarcity of the base metals that are drawn from its bosom. The operations of war interfere with those of husbandry ; but the dearth under which France now groaned sprung more from an empty treasury than from a scanty harvest. The people and government being alike constrained to depend on *assignats*, were equally struggling for existence. Corn and the elements of life are inferior only to bullion in standard value ; and though the genial soil of France produced, and contained,* both in abundance, their possessors were unwilling to exchange substantial commodities for uncertain currency. The humble farmer reluctantly obeyed a law which enjoined him to vend his produce at a nominated rate, and to receive a nominal recompence in return ; but the powerful monopolist, on whom the same injunction was imposed, more easily escaped the penalty of the government, though he more readily raised the fury of the people. Against these capitalists popular wrath had long been excited ; the recent constitution was opposed in the capital chiefly because it contained no enactment against them ; and though the Jacobins then stifled the rising storm, it again threatened to burst out with the fury of a simoom, which sweeps to destruction all within its blast.

Military
Affairs ;

12. The ray of victory, which lately glanced on the republican arms, was equally transient and bright. The Vendéans had again triumphed over the Convention's forces, which were not only destitute of military supplies, but also disorganized by the seditious harangues of Jacobin agents, who, irritated by the opposition of several aristocratic officers, created discontent in the troops by representing military dis-

* Thiers, v. 180.

cipline as inconsistent with civil freedom. The indignation of the generals was naturally aroused by the subversion of that subordination so essential to success; and those most revolutionary in politics were fiercest in resisting the interference. Westermann, the resolute Alsatian, conspicuous in the insurrection on the 10th of August, and subsequently employed as an officer in the north—whence, with 5000 ruthless followers, named the German Legion, he had been removed to repress the Vendean revolt,—had arrested one of these emissaries, and transmitted him to a court-martial, for thus attempting to subvert his command; but the authorities in Paris, on learning the circumstance, instantly transmitted orders for the release of their representative, and the trial of the commander himself. From this he temporarily escaped by the celerity of his movements, yet only to encounter fresh disasters. Advancing into the insurgent province before the arrival of the order, he commenced a system of devastation in retaliation of the Vendean excesses, and carried fire and desolation wherever he appeared. Cruelty, however, generally recoils on the head of the perpetrator. His acts struck the enemy with momentary terror, but in the end they proved fatal to himself. Inflated by success, he rashly penetrated to the headquarters of the insurgents at Chattillon; and though temporarily triumphant, he was soon forced to retreat in disorder, leaving the greater part of his troops dead in the field,* and himself exposed to republican vengeance for the crimes of disobedience and defeat. In another direction the Jacobin pro-consuls had produced the same result, and the military commanders experienced a like misfortune. Biron, an aristo-

CHAP.
VI.

1793.

In La
Vendee;

* Larochejacquelein, 227—229.

CHAP. cratic officer, had evinced a similar spirit, as well
 VI. as sustained a simultaneous defeat ;* and his trial,
 1793. with that of Westermann and other vanquished
 generals, was now impending before the Revolutionary Tribunal in Paris, the authorities in which had resolved to ensure victory by decreeing the penalty of death to defeat. But the Vendéans in the meantime pursued their career unchecked by the republican troops, which for the most part consisted of disorderly levies, strangers to the hardships, and averse to the restrictions of war, swayed only by Jacobin emissaries, who had neither capacity to command, nor docility to obey.

In the
 South ;

In the other provinces revolt, although generally suppressed, still reared its head in isolated districts. The important city of Lyons, having refused to submit to the local dictation, though it offered to acknowledge the general authority of the Convention, was again declared in rebellion ; and prepared to realize the declaration. Marseilles was equally refractory ; and though incapable of affording a resistance so formidable, she had imparted her spirit to Toulon, the chief naval port in the south.

In the
 North.
 Fall of
 Mentz.

In the north the besieged towns had fallen, but not ingloriously. Insecure towards the water, but nearly impregnable by land, Mentz, with its twenty thousand troops and two hundred heavy guns, might have defied all the efforts of fifty thousand foes, if its store of provisions and ammunition had not failed. But after three months' blockade—during which the garrison had often been constrained to subsist on the nauseous bodies of rats in the city, or horses from the river—and several sorties, in one of which their commander received a mortal wound, there remained no alter-

* Jomini, iv. 317-320.

native but to starve or submit. To protract capitulation, and alleviate the famine, two thousand of the inhabitants, who added to the burdens, without increasing the strength of the fortress, had previously quitted the city in hopes of relief, but miserably perished by the fire of the enemy under its walls;* and a similar fate appearing in reserve for the rest, the garrison resolved to surrender to the Prussian king, who had latterly raised himself in their estimation by suspending hostilities during their general's obsequies, and thus displaying one of those traits which sometimes soften the harsh landscape of war. Nor were they deceived in the expectations which this high-minded conduct led them to cherish. The monarch magnanimously testified his admiration for gallant foes by permitting them to depart with all the honours of war from the citadel they had so bravely defended, subject to no condition beyond abstaining for twelve months from meeting the allies in the field—an article which their advantageous employment in La Vendee rendered unimportant.† Valenciennes, after six weeks' bombardment, had yielded on similar conditions, on the destruction, by storm, of the French entrenchment at Famars,‡ and after an attack equally successful on the republican camp of Cæsar, which was almost without a struggle abandoned by its inmates. The Duke of York generously granted terms equally honourable to Condè, though he had previously threatened to put the city to the sword.§ But these disasters were not the less dangerous to France, because free from disgrace to her arms. The capture of Mentz, and submission of the other towns, exposed her soil to the allies in the north ;

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1793.

July 25th.

Of Valenciennes and Condè.

Consequences of.

* Toulangeon, iv. 15, 16. † Thiers, v. 150. ‡ Jomini, iii. 80.

§ Thiers, v. 153.

CHAP. VI. the revolt of Toulon laid her open to the British
 1793. fleet in the south; and the Vendean insurrection
 threatened the same peril in the west. In the east,
 the bold attitude of Lyons was equally menacing;
 and though the general danger was apparently less
 extensive than a short time before, it grew imminent
 in proportion as it became concentrated. The re-
 publican forces were indeed more inured to arms,
 but they had also more experienced foes to encounter
 on the frontiers of the Rhine and the Pyrenees, the
 shores of the Mediterranean, and boundary of the
 Atlantic.

Constitu-
 tional
 Festival,
 Aug. 10th.

13. In the midst of these dangers the republic calmly
 proceeded to celebrate the recent constitution and the
 returning anniversary of liberty. Forty-four thousand
 municipalities—comprising all the towns of France,
 with the exception of Lyons, Marseilles, and those
 of Corsica and La Vendee,—sent four hundred re-
 presentatives to Paris, to accept the new constitution,
 and effect a reconciliation of the capital with the
 country. The latter object was immediately accom-
 plished by the union of these delegates with the
 Jacobin Club, at whose hall they assembled and joined
 its members in discussing the various measures of the
 state: but the other was postponed till the annual
 revolution of that day which witnessed the monarchy's
 subversion. To commemorate the 10th of August,
 1792, the various representatives of the legislature
 of Paris and the provinces, mingled in a scene in
 which sculpture and architecture, painting and poetry,
 mummary and magnificence, under the control of the
 painter David, were strangely blended. Assembled
 round a fountain—named that of Regeneration, and
 erected on the spot where the Bastile lately stood,—
 these motley bodies welcomed with the Marseillaise

Hymn the first rays of that sun which a year before had dawned on the birth of their freedom ; and after participating in the edifying, perhaps elevating, element which flowed from a huge statue of Nature, the president of the Convention, with the representatives of the eighty-three departments, each bearing an olive-branch and pike in his hand, as a sign of reconciliation and symbol of war, proceeded to the Field of Mars in a disorderly procession, of which a chariot containing an urn with patriotic ashes, and another occupied by an old man and woman drawn by their children, were the most conspicuous objects. While passing across the extensive square named after the revolution, and where its most terrible scenes were soon to be displayed, the various trappings of royalty and nobility were consigned to the flames, and several thousand birds committed to the air as an emblem of universal liberty. On the arrival in the vast plain where the altar of the country stood, the chart of the constitution was placed on the consecrated spot ; and amidst the roar of artillery and louder acclamations of the multitude, the various authorities swore fidelity to it with as much fervour as if the oath had never been taken and forgot. A union of the eighty-three pikes into a mass irrefragable and figurative of concentrated strength,* concluded the ceremonies of a day unworthy of record, unless in contrast with the deeds of the morrow, when the people, who now eagerly gave way to an ephemeral farce of pageantry, were ready to act with equal devotion in a protracted tragedy of war.

14. While the republicans were engaged in this transient mimic scene, events daily admonished them

Energetic
Measures
of Defence.

* Thiers, v. 177-192.

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to prepare for another of lasting and momentous reality. Intelligence had successively arrived of the investment and evacuation of Cambray, of the retreat of the French army and advance of the allies, between whom and the capital not a regiment now interposed. The information was instantly published to the populace, and received with all the calmness of conscious strength. Each defeat only augmented their confidence; for bravery discerns resources in despair. But, the jubilee terminated, the hour of action arose. In conjunction with the representatives of the primary assemblies, the Jacobins proposed a general levy of the inhabitants in defence of the country, a forced contribution of money and provisions to support them in arms, the suspension of the constitution and permanence of the Convention, the exclusion of aristocratic persons from office, and the consignment of suspected citizens to imprisonment. By the Committee of Public Safety the more violent of these designs were at first received with hesitation: but, in the course of a few days, during which Robespierre was enrolled in its number, the whole were adopted either in principle or reality. Obedient to its dictates, the Convention passed a decree which summoned all the inhabitants of France to serve in her cause; the young were designed for battle; those encumbered with wives were devoted to the fabrication of arms. To the women were assigned the duty of attending hospitals, and expediting equipments; and old men were employed to appear in the highways and animate the spirits of all by railing at monarchy, as well as recommending republicanism. The houses of the emigrants were converted into barracks for the accommodation of troops, or into magazines for the

accumulation of provisions. A general seizure of horses was made to mount the cavalry ; the palace garden of the Luxembourg covered with forges to construct muskets (a thousand a day) for the infantry, and the banks of the Seine were converted into a manufactory of guns for the artillery. To provide resources for operations so gigantic, a forced loan was imposed on the affluent ; a thousand francs were allotted for the support of each member of a wealthy family, and ten thousand for superfluities ; but all income beyond this amount was devoted for a year to the exigence of the state, and those so amerced received the country's guarantee for eventual repayment, or annual interest in return. The existence of the republic being thus bound up with its debt, those who might have been impervious to the impulse of patriotism, were induced to support it by the more powerful instigation of interest ; and the security of the revolution was still more established by a dexterous amalgamation of the lofty but cold attachment which men feel for their country, with the more ardent yet debasing affection they entertain for themselves. These adverse and generally irreconcilable passions were now blended by a consolidation of those funds from whose diversity so many evils flowed ; and their union was confirmed by a decree that all the debts of the state, from whatever date they issued or dynasty they sprang, should be alike enrolled in a national register, and equally acknowledged as liabilities which the republic would presently requite, and ultimately redeem. Five per cent. was allowed for annual interest ; and every claim on the state was thus converted into a rate of two hundred millions (£8,000,000) a year. The preservation of faith with foreign creditors was main-

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Compul-
sory Loan
from the
Rich.Regula-
tion of the
Finances ;

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And of Pro-
visions.

Maximum
established

tained by a proffer of payment in bullion to those who lived beyond the soil; but, to counteract the schemes of the emigrants, all claims were forfeited unless made within a year. Bold as these measures appear, they were easily devised and intrinsically just; for harsh as seems a law which ordains an inquisition into its subjects' revenues, it is harder still for a country to forfeit its honour. Those who derive protection from a government in peace are bound to support it in war; and however cruel was the fate which drove many of France's gallant sons from her soil, it was incumbent on the state to prevent them preying on its vitals, and to maintain that honour which is still more necessary to nations than to men; for, in the instance of the latter, credit brings only wealth, but in that of the other it yields security. To provide for the multitude who remained and famished at home, was an attempt more difficult, to be accomplished only by means less defensible: for man can easily guide the emblems of lucre, but cannot readily control the elements of life. The penalty of double contribution imposed on those who concealed the amount of their money, was lenient in comparison to the punishment of death, decreed against the trader detected in denying the extent of his merchandise; and the rate directly levied on the fortune of the one, yielded in hardship to the arbitrary sale of the property of the other, for a sum appointed by the municipality of his district. But in times of national peril the rights of the subject must succumb to the demands of the state. A law, called that of *Maximum*, which rendered the secret accumulation of provisions a capital crime, and ordered those already accumulated to be sold at a stated price, was accordingly passed with

scarcely a mark of disapprobation, and obeyed with-
out a murmur of dissent.*

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15. Despotism as these enactments were, their
tenour is unopen to objection when compared with
the acts that followed. In times of anarchy, or in
the estimation of anarchists, vigour is generally
deemed incomplete if unattended by vengeance.
While raising new resources the republicans revived
old resentments. The unfortunate Antoinette still
remained to be pursued for errors in connexion with
her husband's reign, and the imbecile Egalité yet
lived to be punished for faults which might have
been consigned to oblivion. Preparations were ac-
cordingly made for the trial of the one and the doom
of the other. Unsated with vengeance on the bodies
of the living, revolutionary wrath was next extended
to the bones of the dead. A decree, to violate the
royal sepulchres at St. Denis, preceded the persecu-
tion which was to consign to the tomb the descend-
ants of those whose ashes were now committed to the
winds. But republican revenge was not reserved for
royalty alone. Nobility, in the persons of Biron and
Custines, was also destined to experience its power;
and even the plebeian commanders who had so gal-
lantly defended the surrendered cities, were threatened
with punishment for submission. A decree of ex-
termination was also launched against the insurgents
in La Vendee, for the massacre of the men, the ex-
pulsion of the children and women, the conflagration
of the woods, and conversion of their fruitful soil into
a frightful desert. Nor was the ire of the anarchists
bounded by the limits of France. In a solemn edict
the English government was denounced to the repro-

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Revolu-
tionary
Ven-
geance

against the
late Queen,

the Duke
of Orleans,

the Royal
Tombs.

Defeated
Comman-
ders.

La Vendee,

and the
English
Govern-
ment.

* Jomini, iv. 18-22; Lacretelle, *Precise Histoire des Evenements*, &c.
ii. 90-92.

CHAP. VI. bation of the world, and Pitt, its premier, proclaimed the foe of his species.*

1793. 16. The introduction of Carnot to the Committee of Public Safety, simultaneous with Robespierre's, imparted a new tone to the war. Possessed of but little capacity for leading men in the field, but of great ability in devising movements on the map, as well as operations at a distance, the military tactics of the new war minister were as distinguished from those in vogue, as the simple, austere, upright, and antique cast of his mind was conspicuous in the midst of modern degeneracy. To him is due the merit of abrogating that old, inefficient, and sanguinary system of opposing regiment to regiment, and brigade by brigade, which rendered actions protracted, victory uncertain, but slaughter secure. Substituting for this injurious extension of line a concentration of force, which acted with overwhelming power on one decisive point, and subsequently assailed unimportant positions in detail or destroyed them without attack, he laid the foundation of that military greatness which shed such lustre on French arms when a Hoche and Moreau appeared to execute his plans, or a Bonaparte arose at once to invent and achieve. One objection only, as in the greater num-

Military
Affairs;
Character
of Carnot.

His new
Tactics;
their Ad-
vantages,

and Disad-
vantages.

* Unscrupulous as the British statesman was, his worst enemies will readily absolve him of such insanity as that evinced in intercepted letters which he and his agents were accused of concocting. Many of these (all of which were published) were said to have been discovered on the frontiers of France; but an extract from one, as a specimen, may suffice. "Cause," said this precious document, supposed to be addressed by the English premier to an emissary, "cause the exchange to rise till two hundred livres are given for one pound sterling. Discredit the *assignats* as far as possible, and refuse all without the royal impress. Increase the price of provisions; and give orders to your correspondents to buy up all the necessaries of life. *Purchase soap and candles* at any price; or make the public pay for them five francs a pound. *We hope the assassins will conduct themselves with prudence. Women and priests in disguise are most proper for this operation.*"—Thiers, v. 233.

ber of human inventions, attended the new system of operations: the assailants, when numerically inferior, were liable to be enveloped and destroyed by the assailed, if the latter possessed equal resolution and activity; but the slow movements of the enemy, and the obstinacy with which other European powers adhered to the old formalities of war, prevented a discovery of this weakness until their armies were nearly annihilated by those who, in the present age, have originated most of military improvements, as well as civil innovations.

17. Victory hailed the nativity of these novel operations. Dunkirk, which the Duke of York had rashly separated from the allies to besiege, was saved by the bravery of Houchard, or by the incapacity of the British prince, who retreated during the night, leaving his artillery, ammunition, and baggage in the hands of the besieged.* The enemy was repelled at Hondtschoot by the gallantry of Hoche, a young officer, whose military powers had, previous to the revolution, been concealed in the humble obscurity of a guardsman. But a cloud succeeded, which for a moment enveloped their brightness in gloom. A hundred and twenty thousand of the coalesced forces ranged between the Rhine and Moselle; and the French army of eighty thousand, which was designed to attack them in detail, alarmed either by numbers so superior, or doubtful of movements yet little understood, fled, after a brief engagement near Menin, under circumstances so disastrous as to dispel all the joy which the late advantages at Hondtschoot and Dunkirk had raised. Misfortunes are proverbially multitudinous. Other reverses simultaneously occurred to depress the susceptible

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Success at
Dunkirk
and Hondt-
schoot,
Sept. 9th.Defeat at
Menin,
Sept. 15th.Other
Reverses,

* Ann. Reg. 1793, pp. 379-383.

CHAP. spirits of the French. Menin, from which two days
VI. before the prince of Orange had been driven with the

1793. loss of as many thousand men, again fell into the
Sept. 11th; hands of the allies. Quesnay had previously surren-

in Spain
and the
Pyrenees;

dered to their arms; and at Bodenthal the republicans were repulsed by the Prussians, with a loss of two-and-twenty guns, and four thousand men, killed, wounded, or captured in battle.* In the Pyrenees

Domestic
Disasters;

Insurrec-
tion of
Lyons,

the revolutionary banner was equally unfortunate. A slight success by General Davoust, near Perpignan, was followed and effaced by the rout of the veteran Dagobert, after an abortive attack on the Spanish encampment at Masdeu.† At home disaster reared

and
Toulon.

its head as well as abroad. The inhabitants of Lyons had not only resisted the authority, but executed the commissioners of the Convention; and were in consequence subjected to a fierce bombardment, which they sustained with such spirit as to leave it doubtful whether the contest would terminate in the defeat of the republic or in the destruction of its chief commercial mart; and though Marseilles had submitted, a more dangerous insurrection immediately sprang up in the naval port of Toulon, which, veering from violent republicanism to royalty still more furious, had strangled the president of its Jacobin club, proclaimed the dauphin Louis XVII. under the regency of his uncle the count of Provence, and completed a career of crime by yielding possession of its citadel and fleet to the English. The sanguinary decree against La Vendee had animated the inhabitants with the courage of desperation. Fanned by the flames of persecution, their triumphs, previously obtained over unpractised levies of the Parisian populace, were now adorned with laurels snatched from troops com-

* Toulangeon, iv. 53-60.

† Jomini, iv. 273-281.

pletely inured to war. The twenty thousand veterans, transported from Mentz to the insurgent provinces, had been unsuccessful as the others in executing the Convention's threats; and, unable to defeat the insurgents, or unwilling to desolate their country,* had equally failed in subduing the invincible arms of the revolt. CHAP.
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18. These disasters, successively known in the metropolis, produced the usual aggregation of terror, indignation, and revenge. The fury of the people, quickly succeeding to dismay, first assailed the Committee of Public Safety, which had now to sustain simultaneous attacks from violent revolutionists and moderate republicans; the former accusing it of inadequate energy, the latter of needless severity. Eighteen commissioners, lately sent into the provinces, were insufficient to satisfy the immoderate zeal of the one; but their encouragement of anarchy afforded juster complaint to the other. The rashness of these agents, in subverting discipline, had been the chief cause of the recent disasters; for when soldiers are taught to consider subordination inconsistent with freedom, it is vain to expect co-operation in the field; and while officers are promoted for political subserviency, it is idle to anticipate success from their command. The advocates of military discipline and civil toleration justly pointed to the career of the republicans in La Vendee, distinguished only by disorganization and defeat, in partial illustration of this truth; and the conduct of Rossignol—conspicuous for incapacity alone—and of Ronsin, whom equally violent Jacobinism had, in the short space of four days, raised to the successive rank of captain, colonel, general of Affairs in
Paris.

State of
Parties.

* Thiers, v. 289.

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Designs
against the
Conven-
tion.Conduct of
the Com-
mittee of
Public
Safety.Despotism
established
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brigade, and commander-in-chief, afforded corroboration of the rest. But the Jacobins supported their friends with their wonted success, and reason again yielded to force. In opposition to the existing legislature, both parties, though from different motives, agreed; and were alike eager to support it by another, from which the moderate republicans expected greater tolerance, and the extreme revolutionists anticipated additional violence. Each was also panting to indulge that natural thirst for power which is so strongly implanted in man, and is the source of his most exalted as well as debasing emotions. The Committee of Public Safety, being already in possession of the prize, were equally interested in maintaining the authority of the legislature, which was in reality synonymous with their own. A short struggle ensued, and ended like most contests between principle and power. The recent constitution favouring the one, but the present Convention supporting the other, on the motion of St. Just the former was suspended, the latter retained, and the existing government confirmed till the establishment of peace. The Committee of Public Safety was thus installed as the sole power in the state, the legislature being the subservient instrument of its will, and the annexation of the Municipal Committee of General Safety giving it a sway in the various communes as unbounded as that which it previously enjoyed over the different armies and innumerable officials of the state. A despotism, springing from democracy, was thus established, more complete in principle and crushing in reality than any in the most absolute era of the monarchy on whose ruins it arose. The lives and liberties of all were placed at the disposal of a government which had gradually been concentrated from

the country to the capital, from the capital to the Committee, and was soon to pass from the Committee into the hands of a solitary dictator. The power of Robespierre was, in a short period, as supreme in this executive as that of the latter already proved in the senate. But both as yet concealed the odious tyranny. The former, by devotion to the Jacobins, endeavoured to reconcile the poor by hope, and the rich by fear, to a despotism which outraged every principle of justice, every prerogative of freedom; and for a time deluded them with the forms of liberty when the spirit was destroyed. The latter still appeared nominally under control of the Convention, to which, in compliance with a constitutional decree, it every eight days reported its acts.* But this was a proceeding of mere routine; the power of a legislature, and the principles of freedom, are alike lost when their existence depends on the will of a government; and the senate, still more rapidly than the populace, sank into silent slavery to its offspring, whose dictates its sole duty henceforth was to confirm.

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19. And yet, surveyed from an ascent of half a century, with a full knowledge of the terrible catastrophe, though to a succeeding generation this government appears equally arbitrary in origin and revolting in issue, when it is considered that all the excesses, prior to this period, flowed mainly from the premature separation of the first Assembly, and that each subsequent legislature increased in violence as it diminished in experience—bequeathing the one to its successor with augmented intensity, proportionally divested of the other,—it may be surmised that, criminal as the future career of the Convention was, the nativity of another, in the present distracted state of France, might have engendered acts still more atrocious.

Observa-
tions.

* Thiers, v. 301.

CHAPTER VII.

THE REIGN OF TERROR.

1. Character of the New Government.—2. Its first Acts.—3. Condemnation of Custines.—4. Military Affairs; Success of Wattignes; Defeat at Dourlers; Fall of Lyons.—5. Defeat of the Vendeans.—6. Republican Revenge; against Lyons, Marseilles, and Bourdeaux.—7. Tyranny in Paris; State of the Prisons; Conduct of the Prisoners.—8. Trial, Execution, and Character of the Queen.—9. Fate of her Infant Family.—10. Fortune of the Bourbons.—11. Condemnation of the Girondists, the Duke of Orleans, and Madame Roland; Death of Roland, Petion, and other Girondists; Execution of Bailly; Military Commanders, and other Victims.—12. Regulations of Finance and Provisions; Equalization of the Maximum.—13. Reform of Admeasurement.—14. Alteration of the Calendar.—15. Abrogation of Religion; Reign of Reason.—16. Denounced by Robespierre, and virtually abolished.—17. Designs of the Hebertists; Conspiracy of Ronsin; Arrest, Trial, and Execution of the Conspirators.—18. Fate of Danton and his Friends; Camille Desmoulins.—19. Their Arrest, Trial, and Death.—20. Despotism of the Decemvirs; Suppression of the Revolutionary Army, Ministry, and Clubs; Restoration of Religion.—21. Hostilities; Siege and Capture of Toulon; First appearance of Bonaparte; Defeat of the Vendeans; War on the Rhine, in Italy, and Spain; end of Campaign of 1793.—22. French Preparations for Campaign of 1794; Restoration of the Navy; Relative extent of British and French Marine losses.—23. Preparations of the Allies; Policy of Pitt, Austria, Prussia, Russia, Denmark, Sweden, Switzerland, Italy, Spain, and Holland.—24. Campaign of 1794, in the Pyrenees, on the Alps; Victories of Bonaparte.—25. Hostilities in the North; Character of Mack and his Projected Invasion.—26. New Commanders; Pichegru, Michaud, Jourdan, &c.—27. Beginning of the Campaign; Mutual Victories and Defeats; New System of the French; Reign of Terror in the Army; Recapture of Landrecy, &c.; Battle of Fleurus.—28. Lord Howe's Naval Victory.—29. Events in Paris.—30. Increase of Terror and Revolutionary Violence.—31. Attempt to Assassinate Robespierre and Collot d'Herbois.—32. Dissensions in the Government; Designs of Robespierre; Increase of Revolutionary Tribunal's Power; Retirement of Robespierre.—33. Judicial Massacres in Paris; Execution of Malasherbes, the Princess Elizabeth, &c.—34. Provincial Massacres; of Lebon, Carrier; the Noyades.—35. Consequences of.—36. The Result.—37. Arrest of Robespierre and his Associates.—38. Their Rescue, Recapture, and Execution.—39. Character of the Triumvirate.

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Character
of the New
Govern-
ment.

1. The people had now exchanged one species of tyranny for another, and thrown off the yoke of royalty, the sway of republicanism, for the intolerable dominion of plebeian dictators. As in the reign of

Tiberius, a shew of popular government was paraded, fair in appearance, but deceitful in reality, and tending only to plunge the nation into servitude* more abject. It is characteristic of all despots to assume unrestricted liberty to themselves, and deny the most limited freedom to others ; to arrogate license for the few, and impose slavery on the many. Terror is usually their instrument of government ; for power is most readily retained by the means which secured it.† Such has been the lot of the earliest, and will probably be the fate of the latest generations of man : but never was the truth so strikingly illustrated as in the present administration of France, when on the broad base of democracy a despotism was instituted, which made the highest tremble for their safety, and ultimately robbed the humblest of security.

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2. The new government commenced its career with a violence accordant to that which called it into birth. To protect it against open attacks, an army was raised, consisting of the most lawless brigands in the capital, with the most determined of the Jacobins for a staff, and commanded by Ronsin, who was summoned for the purpose from the scene of his revolutionary havoc in La Vendee. To shield it from secret attempts, a decree for the arrest of all suspected persons was issued ; so comprehensive in detail, that all who either by their own acts, or by those of their kinsmen, had exhibited attachment to the old institutions of the country, or repugnance to the new, were included in its range ; so ceaseless in pursuit, that it searched for victims by night as well as by day ; and so terrible in result that all the prisons of France were soon crowded with its prey. To guard it from foreign hostilities,

Its First
Acta.

* Tacitus, Annal. i. 81.

† Sallust, Bell. Cat. p. 2.

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a period was fixed within which the armies were commanded to conquer; to secure it from internal revolt, redoubled preparations were made for the extermination of the Vendéans, and the destruction of Lyons. To surround it with popular support, the most turbulent of the people were remunerated for assembling in its cause;* and to imbue it with impressive awe, the Revolutionary Tribunal was invested with additional terrors. Fifty thousand subordinate committees, comprehending five hundred and forty thousand members, maintained at the rate of £20,000,000 a year,† were instituted, to enforce its will in the provinces; and sixty similar bodies, each of which had a separate prison for its victims,‡ were employed for this purpose in Paris alone.

Condem-
nation of
Custines.

3. The trial and condemnation of Custines—for the terms were now become synonymous—evinced that the government was resolved to execute its threats, and to teach its commanders to conquer, by imposing the penalty of death on defeat. This general, it will be recollected, had, on the outbreak of hostilities, run a brief career of triumph on the Rhine; and, excited by unexpected success, had rashly extended operations into Germany, where he lost by imprudence what he had gained by valour. Impairing the strength of his forces in proportion as he elongated their line, his occupation of Frankfort was transient; and a few days saw him retreating to Mentz, and thence to Strasburg, as a fugitive. Leaving Mentz unprovided for a siege, he subsequently, when appointed commander of the army of the north, neglected to interpose between it and capture; and after a partial de-

* Two francs each for every meeting. These assemblages at the sections were, however, now limited to twice a week.—Thiers, v. 310.

† Chateaubriand, Œuvres, i. 242.

‡ Etud. Hist., Preface;—Ibid.

feat, followed by a pusillanimous flight, he abandoned the garrison to its fate. For these derelictions, or the more offensive imputation of aristocracy, he was arrested on repairing to Paris for instructions; and, after a brief trial, in the course of which, while accused for occupying Frankfort, he was also arraigned for neglecting to seize several other German towns—being thus at once impeached for conduct in which he was culpable, and of crimes in which he was guiltless—he was, notwithstanding an eloquent defence of his own, and a still more affecting appeal by his daughter, declared guilty; and ere another sun had set, he remained an inanimate memorial of revolutionary vengeance. In the course of his trial he displayed undaunted firmness; yet, though personally brave, he shuddered on beholding the guillotine; but eventually died with calmness, confiding, as he said, in his innocence.* His career was rash and inconsiderate, rather than criminal. He imprudently assumed the aspect of conquest, while devoid of the elements of victory; and though his death, like that of the British Admiral Byng, cannot be justified, even by the stern dictates of war; yet in both instances the severe infliction on the individual is extenuated by its impressive example to the service, and its lasting advantage to the nation. The navy of England, and the army of France, were alike ameliorated by the sacrifice of two commanders who hesitated to wield all their country's power, under circumstances coincidental.

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4. Success soon dawned on the daring despots, and confirmed their power by inspiring the popular belief that victory herself obeyed their sanguinary sway. A brilliant attack on the allies at Watignies

Military
Affairs.

* Thiers, v. 320.

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Success at
Watignies.
Oct. 16th.Fall of
Lyons.

Aug. 8th.

land that liberty which they could no longer expect to inhale in the land of their nativity ; but the swords of the unrelenting foe pursued them, and scarcely fourscore reached the genial haven, the rest being massacred on the road. The town immediately surrendered, yet capitulation failed to allay republican rage : a decree of the Convention consigned its chief citizens to the scaffold, and its architectural beauties to the dust ; ordered the very name of the city to be obliterated, and that of Ville Franche substituted, as a record of revolutionary wrath, that future ages might declare “ Lyons resisted liberty, and Lyons is no more ! ” *

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5. The Vendéans simultaneously sustained their first decisive defeat. Dissensions had lately arisen in their councils, and were now followed by their certain train of disasters in the field. Though the spirit of both was equal, and their object the same, a division soon appeared between the upper and lower districts of La Vendee ; and their respective chiefs, instead of securing the common cause by an effective combination, had subverted its stability for the personal ambition of exercising a petty sovereignty in their individual territories. But though distraction diminished their strength, their courage and animosity remained unimpaired : a formidable body of the republic's bravest troops were unable to overawe the one, and the generous efforts of Kleber to alleviate the hardships of the Convention's decree of extermination, failed to allay the other. The gradual concentration of the forces sent to crush the rebellion stimulated the intrepid revolvers to a desperate attempt in behalf of their homes, their religion, and their

Defeat of
La Vendee.

* Lacretelle, xi. 104-121 ; Thiers, v. 247, 328, 344.

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Oct. 10th.

lives; while the atrocities perpetrated by a few of their opponents in some degree justified their cruelty.

Shortly after entering Chatillon, Westermann, it will be recollected, had, with five hundred republicans, been unexpectedly attacked by a powerful insurgent army and forced to retreat in disorder: but returning at dead of night, when the enemy were overcome by wine and sleep, he, with only two hundred troopers, put almost the whole town, men, women, and children, indiscriminately to the sword. A few days subsequently, at Chollet, where their chiefs and principal forces were assembled, the unhappy peasants received a still more decisive blow. Encamped in a body a hundred thousand strong—though perhaps two-thirds of the number consisted of their wives and children, in whose presence and for whose preservation they fought,—they attacked the republicans, and purchased a momentary advantage with the life of Lescure, one of their principal leaders. Retreating, for a brief interval, on the fall of their chief, closely followed by Kleber at the head of the veteran battalions of Mentz, they soon returned to the charge. A

Oct. 15th.

Oct. 17th.

furious engagement ensued: victory for a while hovered on the Vendean banners; but numbers eventually yielded to discipline, and great part of the rebels, including their chieftains D'Elbée and Bouchamps, were mowed down by the artillery of their foes; while those who escaped from the field were pursued by the keen swords of Westermann's ruthless brigade; and next evening saw a miserable mass of eighty thousand men, women, and children, mingled in disorder on the banks of the Loire, distracted and defeated, but still breathing the same fervent devotion to the desperate cause of royalty and religion, for

which they had already endured, and were yet to endure, so much.*

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6. Unsated by success, the vigour and vengeance of the revolutionary government maintained an equal pace. Entitled to admiration as are those who renely pursue the determined tenour of their course, unruffled by adversity, and (rarer still) unflustered by prosperity, the future career of the revolutionary government may excite the astonishment of mankind, but it can raise no applause. The homage of approbation is indeed due to the resolution with which—despite the dissent of their greatest military authorities, and the approach of an inclement winter—the Committee of Public Safety opposed the immemorial practice of entering cantonments, and ordered the prosecution of hostilities until every foreign foe was expelled from their shore; but sympathy is instantly dispelled on contemplating the cruelties simultaneously directed against the subjugated sons of the soil. Lyons, which had offered the most formidable resistance to the republic, was the first victim of its resentment. In a report which Couthon, the bland but ferocious pro-consul to whom the city surrendered, transmitted to the Convention, the inhabitants of the fallen city were divided into three classes,—“the rich and inimical; the rich and indifferent; and the ignorant artisans, devoid of political feeling, and equally incapable of good and evil.” The first, he proposed, should be guillotined, the second stripped of their fortunes, and the third removed from the soil to be replaced by a republican colony.† A decree of destruction was in consequence launched by the subservient senate, and Collot D’Herbois, with two other

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Republi-
can Re-
venge

against
Lyons;

* Larochejacquelein, p. 240; Beauchamps, ii. 99, 100; Jomini, iv. 313-316.

† Thiers, v. 342.

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1793. Under their superintendence, and protected by two thousand of the fiercest republican volunteers, the work of slaughter and devastation was immediately begun. The defenceless inhabitants were guillotined or shot in numbers of fifty or sixty a day, under the directions of D'Herbois, while eight hundred miscreants, employed and led on by Couthon to dilapidate the streets, laid the noblest part of the city in ruins; and when the executioners were exhausted by butchery, or the exterminators wearied with destruction, their leaders proposed grape-shot to complete the sanguinary acts of the one, and powder mines as a substitute for the savage labour of the other.* At Marseilles and Bourdeaux, acts scarcely less atrocious were perpetrated.† In the latter, several of the Girondist deputies who had escaped from Paris were seized, and either executed as outlaws on the spot, or despatched to a not less certain death by the Revolutionary Tribunal in the capital.

Marseilles
and Bour-
deaux.

Tyranny
in Paris.

7. How violent soever in principle, the revolutionary laws had hitherto been modified in practice; and, if recently executed with unmitigated severity in the provinces, the capital had as yet remained comparatively exempt from their enforcement. But the

* Lacretelle, xi. 105-110.

† The spirit with which these zealous emissaries discharged their task may be surmised from an extract of a report by one of their body:—"I have everywhere made terror the order of the day; I have everywhere levied contributions from the rich and aristocratic. Orleans has supplied me with fifty thousand livres, and two days have sufficed to raise two millions in Bourges. If unable to be at all points in person, my delegates have acted for me with equal ability. We have melted the church bells of every parish, stripped the federalists, arrested the suspected, and armed the *vans-culottes* in every direction. I have everywhere caused the priests to be married, electrified hearts as well as minds, guillotined royalists; and, finally, executed my commission as an ardent revolutionist."—Thiers v. 383.

time now approached when the blood-stained banner of proscription was to be raised in the chief city of the republic, carrying death and desolation to the many illustrious prisoners confined within its bosom. Preparations had for some time past been made for a great immolation, to be performed in the outraged name of justice ; and the prisons were again filled with subjects for the sacrifice. Seventy-three deputies, supposed adherents of the Girondists, against whose expulsion they secretly protested, had been snatched from the Convention and immured prior to their trial. The jails of Paris were crowded with nearly three thousand inmates, arrested on a law of suspicion, originally so comprehensive as to have entangled almost every one within its meshes, and subsequently so extended by recent enactments, that offence became inevitable and escape impossible. Those who failed to attend the meetings of the sections, or refrained from descanting on public events, were denounced for their silence ; those who deplored the dangers of the republic were proscribed on doubts of their sincerity ; and it was thus impossible to escape the consequence of the one, without incurring suspicion of the other. Twelve similar articles of a law, termed that of the Suspected,* contributed to form a code from whose grasp none who had either public enemies or private foes could escape ; and the ordinary prisons of the capital being soon insufficient to contain the innumerable victims, private houses were converted into places of confinement. Offenders became so numerous, and offence so frequent, that all emotions of sympathy and fear were dispelled. Arrest was an event of hourly occurrence, and in a short period, all not only contemplated their fate with

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1793.

State of the
Prisons.Conduct of
the Prison-
ers.

* Thiers, v. 388.

CHAP. indifference, but pursued in the midst of immurement
 VII. their usual avocations and wonted pleasures. The
 1793. congenial courage and heedless frivolity of the nation, were displayed alike in these naturally dismal abodes. An equality of rank—generally chimerical in life, and certain only in the grave—was established by an equality in misfortune; as, either to assuage their own sufferings or alleviate those of others, persons once diametrically different in birth, feelings, fortune, and pursuits, freely mingled in the ordinary intercourse and engagements of society. Ladies of high, and females of humble degree, the discarded valet and aristocratic master, were strangely commingled, and all were soon engulfed in a common vortex of pleasure. An infamous Roman emperor, it is said, exhibited his exemption from human emotion by striking the lyre while his capital was burning;* but many of these hapless beings now evinced a greater, yet scarcely more commendable callousness, by mingling in scenes of melody when on the verge of their earthly existence. Musical concerts, and similar frivolities, were subjects of daily occurrence; and though those who participated in such miserable gaieties could have felt no true pleasure, they seemed to be alike strangers to care and aliens from sorrow. A few were engaged in mimic representations of a more melancholy nature: the Girondists, and those doomed to immediate destruction, concentrated their courage for the closing scene, by rehearsing in their cells the various acts of accusation, defence, and condemnation, which they knew would precede the consummation of the tragedy of death.†

Trial of the
 Queen.

8. The late queen, as the most exalted, was selected

* Tacitus, *Annal.*, lib. xv. par. 39.

† Lacretelle, xi. 312-318; Thiers, v. 388-396.

as the first victim of judicial homicide. Transferred from her prison in the Temple to the common goal of Conciergerie, confined in a wretched apartment, separated from her family, deprived of all the indulgence due to her station, and hourly exposed to the brutality of a miscreant named Hebert—formerly the degraded menial of a theatre, and now the despicable tyrant of fallen rank—the high-minded Antoinette had long panted to exchange her present narrow abode for one still more confined and sequestered. “Glorious martyr!” she exclaimed, on learning the death of her husband, “I shall soon follow thee to punishment—grant that I follow thee to the regions of heaven;” * and from that moment prepared for her inevitable doom. A scheme, devised for her escape, had been defeated, chiefly by the strength of her maternal affections; and with an aspect struck by woe, and a head blanched by sorrow, she now appeared before the Revolutionary Tribunal, to undergo the mockery of a trial, in which the forms of justice were followed though the spirit was forgot. By the inhuman ingenuity of Fouquier Toinville, the public accuser—a fiend in whose breast were incarnated all the evil passions which mankind ascribe to the enemy of their race—every act of her past life was converted into crime. Tracing her career from her entrance into France, her love of pleasure, her attachment to her native land, her prodigality in that of her adoption, her influence on the weak understanding of her husband, her lofty spirit, and all the charms which had once been the subject of a people’s adulation, were now represented under the most odious aspect. Her participation in the flight to Varrennes, and her suspected correspondence with the Austrians, were

* Lacretelle, x. 257.

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1793.

Her Death

Oct. 16th.

and Cha-
racter.

the chief grounds of accusation ; but an ignominious charge of an infamous design on the person of her son, from the contemplation of which delicacy shrinks and humanity revolts, was adduced by Hebert, in order to cover her with additional obloquy. " I appeal," she said, " to the feelings of every mother in court whether such a monstrous accusation is possible," when thus impeached with the seduction of her son, with a view to the usurpation of his power ; and the acclamations of all present immediately evinced that nature and reason alike recoiled from its belief. An instant burst of indignation silenced the accuser, but failed to save the accused. The sympathy in favour of the woman quickly yielded to the hatred entertained for the queen. The trial proceeded ; and though the evidence of her guilt in the other articles of indictment rested on equally slender grounds, it sufficed to satisfy judges who would have pronounced her conduct deep as crimson though it had been pure as snow. Condemnation was pronounced with vindictive rapidity ; and two days subsequently to her first appearance before the tribunal, she followed her husband to the tomb, meeting death with the same fortitude she had displayed in life. The vile imprecations of a degenerate populace outraged the last moments of a queen, on the slightest insult to whom but a few years before, an Irish orator has eloquently said " a thousand swords would have leaped from their scabbards." * Her career affords the best criterion of the masculine powers of her mind, and the feminine graces of her person. Her headlong heedlessness in prosperity, her prodigal participation in all the passions and prejudices of a licentious court, would demand reprobation, were

* Burke, i. 409.

not reprehension restrained by her dauntless deportment in adversity. The chief traits of her character have already been described;* but in allusion to a princess, personal charms may not be forgot. The friends and foes of Marie Antoinette unite in attributing to her every female attraction. Eyes brilliant, but voluptuously soft, illumined a face whose beauty seemed designed by nature to inspire passion; and motions, graceful as those of the gazelle, adorned a form whose symmetry appeared intended to indulge it. Nor was her ardent temperament insusceptible of the flame which her presence excited; and she has been accused, apparently with truth, of quenching it beyond the marital shrine; although, in her extenuation, it is alleged that the torpid nature of her husband left her, for years, a stranger to nuptial pleasures.† But though chastity—which, if not the source of other feminine virtues, is at least their safeguard—be in her instance of doubtful existence, most of the amiable, and all the attractive, ornaments of woman remained after the bulwark was gone. A melancholy halo, associated with ideas of elegance and pleasure, invests her name, and her faults are forgotten in the memory of her misfortunes.

9. A fate still more dismal awaited her unfortunate offspring.* Her daughter indeed, the present Duchess D'Angoulême, escaped after several years of immurement, and was restored to the surviving members of her family in 1796, in exchange for Lafayette and some Austrian prisoners of war; yet not until her own sufferings, and those of her family, had banished the bloom from her cheek, and thrown a melancholy blight over all her future joys and sorrows. Her sister-in-law, the amiable princess Elizabeth, soon

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1793.

Fate of her
infant
Family.

* See Chap. i. pp. 15, 16. † Campan, i. 173.

CHAP. followed Antoinette to the scaffold ; but a more
 VII. wretched destiny was reserved for the Dauphin, her

1793. infant son. Torn from his mother, the hapless child for two days refused all nourishment, * and during several months, all consolation. The smiles of infancy were alike dispelled from his lips, and the gladness of youth from his forehead ; but the misery of the helpless boy, and the serenity with which he suffered, equally failed to raise either pity or emotion in the breast of Simon, his brutal jailer. Tortured by this miscreant, and Hebert, to extort an avowal of crimes connected with his mother, † the child ever afterwards preserved an affecting silence ; but reason at last sank under the inhuman treatment ; and after he had been two years consigned to the most degrading pursuits, the grave happily closed on his brief career, leaving him insensible to the loss of his father and the death of his mother, in so far as they were reflected upon him, and ignorant of all he had lost in losing them.

June 8th,
 1795.

Fortune of
 the Bour-
 bons.

10. Though premature, it may not be improper to epitomise in a sentence the future career of this unfortunate race, as an impressive memorial that royalty is not exempt from human vicissitudes. The chief of the Bourbons were either extirpated, or in exile now : another generation has seen them restored and rejected, returned by foreign bayonets, untaught by adversity, unaltered in prosperity ; rejected, and, in a better branch of their family, again restored : has witnessed their sceptre swayed, in the interval, by a son of the people, greater in real greatness than all their race ; has beheld the inborn vigour of a man substituted for the hereditary weakness of a monarch, the oriflamb of a saint ‡ supplanted by the eagle of a

* Lacretelle, xi. 232. † Ibid., xii. 371. ‡ The Golden Banner of St. Louis.

conqueror: has seen the victor's banner strike to liberty in its turn; and a new age * surveys, with mingled admiration and regret, the gallant nation, so long enthralled by civil and military despotism, enjoying, under a beneficent monarch, the blessings of enlightened institutions, but yet chafing under the restrictions of limited freedom.

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11. The Girondists were the next objects of republican vengeance. The twenty-one who had first been arrested, were the heralds that ushered the others to the grave. The proof of their crime (alleged confederation) was slight, the indictment vague and unsusceptible of rebutment; but the defence was brilliant, and the trial protracted. During several days, the walls of the Revolutionary Tribunal re-echoed the noblest bursts of modern eloquence. The glowing accents of Vergniaud were heard, but in vain: the impressive voice of Condorcet was raised for a moment, and extinguished for ever. Their eloquence threatening to prolong the proceedings, and the march of justice, rapid as it was before the Revolutionary Tribunal, being deemed too slow by its blood-thirsty votaries, an act was, on the motion of Robespierre, passed in the interval, to authorize, in every instance, the termination of proceedings after three days had elapsed. Arrested in the midst of their defence by this atrocious enactment, the accused were next day convicted, and, on the following, consigned to the guillotine. Two only of all the number attempted to purchase life by retracting their principles; but the attempt was unavailing, and they ultimately suffered with the dignity of the rest. "I die," said one of them, named Lasource, in prophetic strains, to his ferocious judges, "I die at a moment

Condemnation of
the Girondists.

Oct. 31st.

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The Duke
of Orleans.Madame
Roland.Death of
Roland
and his
Friends.

when the people have lost reason ; you will die on the day they recover it ;" * and the last moments of the others were embittered solely by the thought that liberty expired with their lives. The miserable Duke of Orleans, who had been connected with all parties and rejected by all in turn, in a few days followed them to the scaffold. To embitter his parting hour, the mournful cavalcade was stopped before the palace of his ancestors ; but he merely elevated his shoulders, and, with a melancholy smile, exclaimed, "They used here to applaud me." He was condemned for vague ambition, and his own, or his son's, supposed designs upon the throne. He in vain protested his innocence, and threatened to destroy, like another Brutus, his son with his own hands, if he entertained such (since realized) dreams of royalty. † He was convicted ; and had the misfortune to lose popularity without desert, as he had gained it without merit. He died with undaunted fortitude : all the race of Orleans are brave. The courage displayed by Madame Roland was of a more affecting nature. Accompanied by a male companion in misfortune—whose drooping spirits she endeavoured to revive,—she calmly resigned herself to the executioners, and expired crying "Oh Liberty ! what crimes are done in thy name !" ‡ She was condemned, principally, for refusing to betray the retreat of her husband ; whose maturer years, notwithstanding, were supposed to have inspired her with the reverence of a daughter rather than with the affection of a wife. On receiving intelligence of her death, Roland himself avoided a similar fate, by falling, like Cato, on his sword. Almost all his associates died by violence. Barbaroux, Gaudet, and Salles were discovered in a

* Mignet, ii. 28. † Lacretelle, x. 230. ‡ Ibid., xi. 278.

cave near Bourdeaux, and consigned to the guillotine. CHAP.
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 Petion and Buzot, after wandering for some weeks in the forests, avoided starvation by terminating, with their own hands, a wretched existence; and were found dead in a field, half-devoured by the wolves or the eagles.* The fate of Bailly—a name distinguished in science as well as civil annals—was, if possible, more piteous still; and distinguished not less by the serene composure of the man than by the refined cruelty of his murderers. After dragging him, for several hours, with fettered hands, through the various streets of the capital—during which he was exposed to the revolting insults and still more brutal violence of the multitude—when his faltering limbs could no longer support the inclement weather and his enfeebled frame, the savage populace at last erected an ambulatory guillotine on an ordure heap near the banks of the Seine, to terminate his sufferings, but not without insult renewed. “You tremble, coward!” said a ferocious soldier, in reproach to the old man, on observing his body quiver in the air: “No, my friend,” replied the serene philosopher, “it is only cold;” and after a red flag had been burned beneath his eyes, he was relieved by the axe from the protracted pains he now endured for his supposed participation in Lafayette’s attack on the rioters in the Champs de Mars.† Houchard made a like atonement for neglecting to pursue the enemy, on York’s retreat from Dunkirk; and Brunet, another general, expiated by the same penalty his omission to despatch a military division from Nice to Toulon. But in such a crowd of victims, only those illustrious in virtue, or conspicuous in crime, can at the present day be distinguished. In recording the

Execution
of Bailly.Military
Command-
ers.Other
Victims.

* Mignet, ii. 29.

† See Chap. ii. p. 77.

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Regula-
tions of
Finance
and Provi-
sions.

history of this dismal era, the historian can with difficulty find expressions to vary the sad recital of crime.

An indiscriminate massacre, in the outraged name of justice, ensued ; in which neither age, nor sex, nor condition was spared : grey hairs were dragged to the scaffold ; and infancy, on the eve of opening its eyes to-day, found a tomb in the womb of its mother.*

12. The universal terror inspired by these sanguinary deeds enabled the government to complete what its late violent decrees had failed to accomplish. The recent financial laws had produced their desired result : money, obtained either from loans violently levied or from contributions voluntarily proffered to avert suspicion, freely flowed into the republic's coffers, and its paper currency now equalled bullion in value ; but the regulations imposed on the price of provisions had only in part succeeded. Avarice is a passion implanted in the human breast still more deeply than fear ; and notwithstanding the rigorous penalties employed to enforce the *maximum*, the retailers of food had evaded the law, either by selling at a higher price in secret to the rich, and shutting their stores to the poor, or, when this was impracticable, by vending the most insalubrious sustenance to the latter for the sum which the civil authorities affixed. Its partial operation had also prevented the anticipated benefit. Those from whom the scheme originated having overlooked the consideration that, to render a maximum effectual, it must be equally imposed upon all, the retailer—to whom alone it had as yet been applied—was ruined by a command to sell his wares at a nominated rate, while the merchant from whom he purchased their elements, and the artisan who re-

* For a horrid account of the massacre of pregnant women, see Toulangeon, v. 103, 104, 199.

duced them to fabric, were exempted from a like restriction. To remedy these evils, a reformation of the recent code was requisite. The imposition was accordingly equalized : an indemnity was offered to the ruined retailer : and a Committee of Subsistence appointed to control the monopolist as well as correct the abuses by which civilians and soldiers equally suffered.*

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Equaliza-
tion of the
Maximum.

13. The reformation of Weights and Measures was considered not less necessary ; and, as accomplished by the sons of science, who then calmly pursued their researches, undisturbed by foreign war or civil strife, it is one of the few revolutionary acts which posterity may survey with satisfaction unalloyed. Distilled water of an equal temperature being, in volume and in weight, the same in every clime, was selected by these philosophers as the basis of their operations ; and by indefinitely multiplying or dividing by the numeral ten, they devised that system of admeasurement which, under the name of the *Decimal*, has been the admiration of science in succeeding generations. Topics like these appear frivolous and uninteresting in history, but on such trifles the life of man is engaged and his welfare depends.

Reform of
Admea-
surement.

14. The alteration of the Calendar was a measure of more doubtful expedience ; though a tribute of applause is due to the beauty of the foundation on which the revolutionary superstructure was raised. The Gregorian computation of time, it will be recollected, had already been abjured for one commemorative of the republic's establishment, and as this coincided with the autumnal equinox, it was resolved to commence future years on the 22nd of September. The former names of the months were

Alteration
of the
Calendar.

* Thiers, v. 440-446.

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likewise rejected, and supplanted by others more descriptive of winter's storms and summer's sun, the fruits of autumn and flowers of spring. Numbered from that day, twelve months, of thirty days each, were respectively named Vendémiaire, Brumaire, Frimaire, Nivose, Pluviose, Ventose, Germinal, Floréal, Prairial, Messidor, Thermidor, Fructidor. But here any charm of change and name is suddenly arrested. The five days, still wanting to complete the year, were absurdly dedicated to the *sans-culottes*, or lowest classes of the community, by whose instrumentality the revolution had mainly been achieved, and were successively designated by the epithets of Genius, Labour, Good Acts, Recompence, and Opinion; the last being a revival of the Roman Saturnalia, during which the humblest was allowed to address the highest with license unrestricted and unpunished. A great Revolutionary Festival was designed to confer a name on the additional day of bissextile years; and the revolution becoming more extreme in change as it descended in time, the decimal system, which had been devised for substances, was now extended to space. Weeks were superseded by *decades*, or a space of ten days, the last of which was devoted to recreation as a substitute for the obsolete sabbath. A design to supplant the ordinary hours, by sub-dividing the day into ten departments, and these again by equal numbers, was also contemplated, but ultimately abandoned as impracticable.*

Abrogation
of Religion.

15. Viewing Religion as a pastime interesting to senile members of one sex and those of all ages in the other, or as an instrument useful to restrain the ignorant in this world, if of no advantage in a future, the Convention had not yet interfered with its in-

* Mignet, ii. 34.

stitutes, except by enforcing the decrees of former Assemblies against refractory priests, and reducing the revenue of episcopal dignitaries to a sum more consistent with apostolical simplicity. Though all sects were tolerated, catholicism was still the acknowledged religion of the state. But the commune of Paris had long surveyed with hostility the existence of an institution, inconsistent with the recent innovations, and more apt to excite the vituperation of the weak than to inspire veneration in the wise. Robespierre and the leading members of the legislature were simply deists, attached to the established religion by motives more secular than sincere ; but Hebert, with the chief representatives of the commune, had avowedly advanced into atheism, and resolved to substitute the worship of reason for adoration of the Divinity, or, in their own daring words, " to dethrone the kings both of earth and heaven."* Yet, if Christianity were inconsistent with reason, and its professors devoid of humility, the new Reason was equally irreconcilable with nature, and its preachers divested of dignity. Chaumette, a shallow declaimer, and Anacharsis Clootz, an insane enthusiast, were the principal apostles of its creed : the former inculcated virtue, and inveighed against immorality, with such effect that his disciples in the commune prohibited the hitherto insuperable evil of courtesans ; the other, an expatriated Prussian nobleman, who rejoiced in a gigantic fortune and the still more cherished title of " Representative of the Human Race," denied any other God than nature, and disavowed all divinity except that of the people.† The proselytes of a new faith are generally more fanatical than its founder. The converts soon outstripped their

CHAP.
VII.

1793.

Reign of
Reason.

* Lacretelle, x. 300.

† Thiers, v. 460.

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teachers in ardour for the propagation of the favourite religion. Willing beauty superseded venal charms ; and when conception was indiscriminately extolled as a virtue, half the females in the capital became parturient. All the laity of the metropolis were speedily converted : communion with the gentler sex being friendly to devotion. Ecclesiastics of every rank were enrolled in the number of its advocates, their minds as debased as their habits were degrading. Gobet, the archbishop of Paris, appeared before the bar of the Convention to throw down his mitre, ring, cross, and crozier.* Priests daily presented themselves in the chamber to repudiate their creed, amid the acclamations of the multitude. Nor was the scandalous apostacy confined to ministers of catholicism ; protestant clergymen also publicly renounced their functions, amid the applause of a thousand spectators.† The authorities of the city formally rejected religion in favour of reason ; and, in all the churches under their control, substituted statues of Marat and Lepelletier for the images of more antiquated saints. The sanctuaries of ancient worship were stripped of their ornaments, and the sacrilegious spoils, carried in triumph to the Convention, were presented with profanely burlesque speeches, addressed sometimes to the Assembly, at others to the representatives of holy martyrs who had inflamed the devotion, or fanned the superstition of their forefathers.‡ The day usually dedicated to the adoration

* The reduction of episcopal revenues from 70,000 to 6,000 francs (*i. e.* from nearly £3,000 to £240) a year, possibly contributed to diminish the devotion of the bishops for their old religion.

† Thiers, v. 462.

‡ “ Oh, you instruments of fanaticism ! ” exclaimed a deputation who repaired with some silver saints to the bar, “ Blessed martyrs of every degree, be patriots at last ! Arise in a mass, and serve your country by converting yourselves into money, and do us that good in this world which you wished

of the Deity, was devoted to the recital of the rights of man, to the narration of news from the army, and discussion of public events. The metropolitan church of Notre Dame, where these promulgations were made by the mayor and municipality of Paris, was converted into a Temple of Reason, and revolutionary songs supplanted the hallelujahs which once resounded under its vaulted aisles and lofty roof. A triumphal procession was ordained by the civic authorities for the solemnization of the universal heresy. The wife of an operative in an art which has conferred on knowledge immortality,* personated the goddess of the day; the wildest spirits of the commune filled the office of her high priests; and, after a proclamation of the principles of the new religion, in the midst of licentious ribaldry, its supporters united in a disorderly pilgrimage to the Convention, where the president publicly embraced their divinity, and the whole assembly, impelled either by fervour or by fear, joined the procession on its return to the cathedral, to complete the degrading mockery.

16. Superstition bears within its bosom the elements of dissolution, and refinement rarely fails to bring them to maturity. Though the scene of barbarities more brutal than any which the darkest ages of mankind disclose, France still contained enlightened savages who spurned this base idolatry, raised nominally on reason's shrine. Robespierre surveyed, with undisguised disdain and disgust, proceedings lamentable from their grossness, and ludicrous in their ab-

Denounced
by Robes-
pierre;

to do us in the other." Similarly absurd parodies were daily made, to the alarm of the pious and the amusement of the profane.—Thiers, v. 464-7, &c.

* Madame Momoro, the Goddess of Reason, was a printer's wife. Mr. Alison asserts that "she was a celebrated beauty of the opera," and with indecorum unexpected from such a quarter, adds that "she was known in more than one character to most of the Convention;" but he adduces no authority for the insinuation.—History, &c. ii. 80.

CHAP.
VII.

1794.

and vir-
tually
abolished.Designs of
the Hebert-
ists.

surdity. Proceeding to the hall of the Jacobins, he denounced the new religion in a speech to which zeal imparted the eloquence he rarely displayed, and naturally did not possess. Describing belief in a Divinity as the refuge of the poor, and atheism as the resort of the rich, he enforced the necessity of acknowledging the Deity as a measure of expedience; and, with pious profanity, concluded his harangue by declaring faith in a Higher Power as so indispensable to human government, that, "if no God existed, it was necessary to invent one."* His opinion was omnipotent with the Jacobins, and their voice was now the sole oracle of public sentiment. By proposing a "purification" of the club, he expelled Anacharsis Clootz from its ranks: Chaumette, the other apostle of reason, escaped a like ejection only by timely recantation; but Hebert was more deeply compromised, as, in a journal, under the name of Father Duchesne, he had outraged every feeling, whether human or divine. Obedient to the club, the commune revoked its interdiction of Christianity in the churches; and, complying with the desires of both, the Convention extended protection to catholicism, and to every other sect, by an act of universal toleration. The spoliation of sacred buildings was arrested by a public declaration that the treasury no longer needed contributions from the saints; and the dominion of reason, though not so unpopular as that of monarchy, sank rapidly as it rose. Its reign was revolting; but superstition seldom assumes a form inoffensive.

17. This religious dissension was only the precursor of a more deadly political strife, terminating in the immediate subversion of one of the parties, and the ultimate extinction of both. Secretly impelled by

* Thiers, vi. 22.

Robespierre, the Jacobins accused Hebert and his violent associates of fomenting internal discord to promote the views of foreign powers ; and, at the same time, impeached Danton for his reluctant assent to the recent measures of revenge. Abandoning the others to their fate, Robespierre, with zeal well-dissembled, hastened to the defence of his detested rival, but still formidable friend ; and jesuitically enumerating, while affecting to repel, various imputations of corruption, ambition, and apostacy, on which Danton was arraigned, he apparently secured his acquittal by the club, yet, in reality, left him still more divested of that popularity which had been, for some time past, declining. Danton thus, for the present, escaped ; but Hebert and the ultra-revolutionists were already in the arms of justice. The Committee of Public Safety eagerly seized the moment for crushing a party who, either as turbulent demagogues in the city, or despotic agents in the provinces, had braved its authority or compromised its power. A decree was accordingly passed for the arrest of Hebert and his associates ; nominally on a charge of peculation in the public funds, and participation in a foreign intrigue, designed and disclosed by Chabot, an apostate friar, one of their number ; but in reality for attempting to substitute the sway of the commune for that of the Committee and Convention.* Several aliens, whose revolutionary sympathies had carried them to France, were simultaneously incarcerated as spies, with the view of confirming the allegation of conspiracy ; and a similar mandate was at the same time launched against Maillard, Ronsin, and Vincent, the first and second of whom were respectively infamous for conducting the massacres of September, and di-

* Mignet, ii, 35, 36.

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recting the provincial devastations ; while the last was suspected of fomenting intrigues against the government in Paris. The arrest of Ronsin and Vincent was, however, not unopposed. Collot D'Herbois, an old theatric performer, of a disposition equally sanguinary and depraved, recently enrolled in the Committee of Public Safety, vehemently defended Ronsin, who had been thrown into prison for proposing to destroy the whole inhabitants of Lyons,* and consign their bodies to the Rhone, that its billows, as they rolled past Toulon, might bear on their bosom a terrible admonition to the rebels of the south. The vindictive mind of D'Herbois, who had formerly been hissed on its stage, led him to concur in the design. The Cordelier club supported Vincent with equal energy ; and the zeal of the enemies of both was still more conducive to their safety than the efforts of their friends. Phillipeaux, their chief opponent, a moderate republican recently returned from La Vendee, in a vivid report of the devastations he had witnessed, indiscriminately accused Ronsin of atrocities which he undoubtedly perpetrated, and of cowardice, of which he was unquestionably guiltless. Truth commingled with falsehood is the most dangerous species of calumny in operation ; but, when detected, it is also the least noxious in effect. The odium with which mankind surveys the unnatural union, shields the criminal ; and, in the revulsion of feeling, the recollection of crime is momentarily obliterated by the evidence of innocence. Ronsin, against whom, beyond the publication of his intended massacre at Lyons, no ground of impeachment existed, and Vincent, whose crimes were, as yet, equally undefinable,

* A hundred and forty thousand in number: he proposed to save only fifteen hundred.—Thiers, vi. 21.

were accordingly released, invested with additional power by the popular reprobation of their punishment, and imbued with increased resentment by their own sense of unmerited suffering. But their eagerness for vengeance led them beyond their means; re-established their enemies, and proved fatal to themselves. No longer concealing their indignation against the existing administration, they proposed to supplant it by a democratic despotism, consisting of a supreme judge and a chief of a military tribunal, by whom all the functions of the state were to be executed with the spirit of martial law. To these purely tyrannical authorities they designed to attach another still more ominous, who, under the name of *Censor*, or Public Accuser, should carry into effect the judicial massacres by which the new government was to be distinguished, and render it completely in unison with the provincial revolutionary tribunals, on whose model it seems to have been founded. Insane as the proposition appears, those who had already wielded a similar force with such ferocity in Lyons, Marseilles, and Bourdeaux, were prepared to attempt, and a starving population, with the numerous brigands of the capital, afforded facility to achieve it. The commotion of the lower orders, the insolence of the Revolutionary Army,* which Ronsin commanded, and the excitement in the Cordelier club, where the chief influence of the conspirators lay, all announced the approach of the plot to maturity. Pache, the subservient mayor, as well as obsequious tool of all parties, was proposed as the intended civic judge; and the appointment of Ronsin as military president was on the eve of completion,

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1794.

Ronsin's
Conspiracy

* Established for the protection of the Convention, and composed chiefly of the most desperate adventurers in Paris.

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Arrest of
the Con-
spirators ;

Their
Trial,

when the Committee of Public Safety, having reconciled its dissensions, fell on the conspirators with irresistible fury. Fulminating in the hall of the Jacobins one of those menacing reports which now preceded descent on its prey, D'Herbois himself, on the part of the government, anathematized the contemplated insurrection with all the vehemence of his savage temper, and with all the success which as yet had attended his ferocious eloquence. Boldly proceeding to the hall of the Cordeliers, his triumph there was equally striking ; the conspirators, deserted by their chief popular support, were arrested and consigned to the Revolutionary Tribunal, before their desperate retainers in the city could assemble. Simultaneously with Ronsin, Hebert, Vincent, and Momoro, their associate, whose wife had personated the goddess in the late reign of Reason, Gobet, the archiepiscopal proselyte, with Chaumette and Cloutz, the apostles of its impieties, were arraigned at the bar, along with the aliens recently incarcerated, in order that the whole might seem accomplices in foreign intrigues as well as in domestic conspiracy.* But, base as Hebert and his comrades were, they appear to have been innocent of external connexions ; foreign states considering them too despicable even for traitors. Their real crimes were those of revolutionists of the lowest order,—a desire to subvert the existing despotism by one still more despotic, and to substitute for the small degree of existing liberty an unbounded licentiousness in language, morals, and religion. Nor was it on the ground of such confederacy, an investigation of which might have embarrassed some compromised members of the Committee,† they were mainly condemned.

* Thiers, vi. 187.

† Ibid. vi. 189.

Hebert was convicted chiefly on the charge of theft, while a menial in a theatre ; * and the others fell victims to calumnies more unfounded, if not so ignominious, adduced by Fouquier Tinville, the public accuser. Slight evidence of participation in a fictitious foreign plot convinced a tribunal resolved to condemn ; and next day Hebert, with eighteen of his associates, expired amid the railleries of a rabble as infamous as himself. † His cowardice, equalled only by his baseness while living, was conspicuous in the arena of death. Vincent, Momoro, and Chauvette, his colleagues in crime, and companions in punishment, displayed equal trepidation when arrested, but finally sustained their fate with fortitude. Ron-sin and Clootz maintained equanimity throughout ; and in their last moments displayed the unshaken courage, inherent in the savage nature of the one, and emanating from the stoical insanity of the other.

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1794.

and Exe-
cution.March
25th.

18. The fate of Danton corroborates an evangelical, but generally erroneous proverb, that man rarely pursues a course of good or of evil in this world without, ere the termination of his mortal career, feeling its revulsion in return. Though beautiful and befitting be the maxim that virtue and vice ultimately recoil on the heads of their votaries, it is seldom confirmed by the experience of the present life, however exemplified it may be in the dispensations of a future. But the death of Danton may be cited as an instance

Fate of
Danton
and his
Friends.

* "Tinville," says a contemporary historian, "who was in his congenial element when confronted with such a criminal, covered Hebert with infamy, but contented himself with substantiating a charge of purloining shirts, handkerchiefs," &c.—Thiers, vi. 194.

† The populace loaded him with such brutalities as "*Il est bougrement en colère le Père Duchesne*," a cry which the itinerant newsvenders were wont to vociferate when his journal contained any article of peculiar pungency, and Mr. Alison has freely translated, "He is in a devil of a rage, Father Duchesne."—History, &c. ii. 100.

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of retributive justice. Originally the most turbulent spirit of the revolution, the avowed author of the insurrection in August, and suspected promoter of the massacres in September, he had recently, like a gladiator wearied with conflict, or exhausted by slaughter, in a great degree abandoned the tumultuous theatre in which he had borne a part so conspicuous; and his power had sunk in proportion as his violence subsided. Seduced by corruption, or impelled by remorse, he had for some time past shewn a disposition to substitute toleration for the turbulence he formerly advocated, had discountenanced the expulsion of the Girondists, and the assumptions of the commune; but finding his counsels rejected for those of fiercer spirits yet unquenched by fortune, he had gradually withdrawn from the scene, without reflecting that he who floats not with a revolutionary stream must either be swallowed by its current or stranded on its shore. But while reposing with confidence on his blood-stained laurels, enervated by a recent connubial alliance, and overpowered by the indolence incidental to ardent minds when couched in inaction, his enemies were plotting his fall. Robespierre had long considered him a barrier to supremacy, as well as rival in power, aware that, if Danton were removed, no obstacle to his own ambition would be presented by Couthon, Collot D'Herbois, and St. Just—who, with himself, directed the principles of government—nor by Carnot, Barrère, and Billaud Varennes, whose attention was devoted chiefly to measures of administration. The Committee of Public Safety, considering the moderation which Danton and his friends now counselled, as still more fatal to their despotism than the violence for which Hebert and his associates had contended, were

equally eager for his destruction; and the adherents of the Hebertists pursued him with vindictive animosity, the death of their leaders having been accelerated by the principles of clemency and the eloquence of his friend Camille Desmoulins. In a parody on the dismal state of Rome under Tiberius, which Tacitus has so forcibly described,* this brilliant, glowing, and once ardent, but now indulgent revolutionist—who spoke of matters with the profound sense of Machiavel, and of men with the piercing wit of Voltaire†—had delineated the condition of Paris, under the sway of the Hebertists, in terms equally true and appalling. Under the iron rule of Tiberius, he said, which these ultra-revolutionists wished to emulate in Paris, “it was necessary to exhibit joy at the death of a friend or a brother, if one wished to escape a like fate himself. Every thing gave umbrage to the tyrant. Were a citizen possessed of popularity, the prince deemed him a rival who might arouse civil war; did he, on the contrary, shun it, he was suspected of courting applause by the modesty of his demeanour. Were he rich, there was danger of his corrupting the people; were he poor, it was necessary to watch him, for what is so dangerous as enterprising poverty? Were he of a melancholy temperament, he was considered as mourning the prosperity of the state; were he of a gay disposition, he was supposed to rejoice at its calamities.”‡ To the Hebertists this animated philippic proved more fatal than even a fierce denunciation by Robespierre. But while availing itself of Desmoulins’ brilliant and blighting talents for the destruction of one faction, the government had re-

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1794.

Camille
Desmou-
lins.

* Annal. iv. 69.

† Mignet, ii. 41.

‡ Journal du Vieux Cordelier; cited in Thiers, vi. 113, 114.

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solved to strike the other in its turn, and to consolidate its power by the ruin of both. The Dantonists, on their side, endeavoured to impeach the Committee for the conduct of its agents in La Vendee, and to induce the Convention to shake off the yoke of its thralldom. Each party arrayed its power for the conflict, and endeavoured to enlist Robespierre, who as yet had remained undecided. But the government having consented to give up the Hebertists to his fury, he in return agreed to sacrifice Danton;* and thus simultaneously gratified both his animosity and ambition, by an arrangement which at once delivered him from an odious faction and a formidable foe. Before the fall of the Hebertists an ominous report, by St. Just, denouncing Anarchists and Moderates with equal fury, displayed the deadly designs of the Committee; but, unwarned by the fate of their opponents, the survivors reposed in fatal tranquillity, while the Committee vigorously prepared for their destruction. Danton, plunged in sensual lethargy, and either heedless of the danger, or incapable of averting it, when informed of the Committee's preparations for his arrest, simply replied, "They dare not." "I am wearied," he exclaimed, "of life, disgusted with humanity, and wish to die;"† and though his associates evinced less of his reckless audacity and courageous despair, they appeared equally insensible to their impending doom.

Their
Arrest,

19. Meanwhile the preparations of his enemies proceeded with silent alacrity. A second report, by Robespierre, inveighed against both factions as alike implicated in domestic plots and foreign intrigues; and a few days after the execution of the one, a third, by St. Just, ushered in the arrest of the other. A

* Mignet, ii. 48.

† Lacretelle, xi. 368.

vain attempt by Legendre, one of their adherents, to save, by summoning them to the bar of the Convention, was resisted by Robespierre, who, false as a friend but sincere as a foe, now threw off the mask of hypocrisy, and with base perfidy deplored the necessity of sacrificing private friendship to the public welfare. An interview had shortly before taken place between them; when Danton, stung by remorse, exclaimed, "I would rather die than allow another innocent person to suffer;" and exerted all his persuasion to gain Robespierre to his side. But the other had already matured his designs; and, after contemptuously replying, "Who has told you that an innocent is about to suffer?" he retired, with all the ties of their friendship broken.* Pursued with ceaseless malignity, Danton was soon afterwards consigned to a prison. "My friends," he said to his fellow-prisoners on entering it, "in a short time I had hoped to relieve you; but I am now one of your number, and know not how it may end." Pausing for a moment, he seemed buried in reflection, and mournfully added, "On this day last year I was the means of instituting the Revolutionary Tribunal: I crave pardon of God and man; it was never meant to be the scourge of humanity."† To the bar of his own creation he was rapidly hurried, Trial, along with Desmoulins, Philipeaux, and Herault Sechelles, an enlightened republican, equally distinguished by elegance of taste and refinement of habits. They were arraigned simultaneously with Chabot and others accused of forgery and peculation, to associate their names with these degrading charges; and in the same indictment were included the names of Westermann and several aliens of obscure rank, to

* Mignet, ii. 51, 52.

† Ibid., pp. 56, 57.

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convey an imputation of foreign conspiracy. Hitherto passive both in danger and arrest, all the energy of Danton's mind was displayed on his trial. "I am Danton," he replied to the president, who demanded his name, "well known in the revolution; I am thirty-five years of age. My abode will soon be in nothingness; but my name will live in the temple of history."* He listened with suppressed disdain to the various charges of profligacy, corruption, and cupidity; and heard, in silent scorn, the enumeration of successive intrigues with Mirabeau, Dumouriez, the duke of Orleans, and Girondists, for the restoration of the Bourbons; but when accused, in the calumnious report of St. Just and the infamous indictment of Tinville, of cowardice during the insurrection on the 10th of August, the ferocity of his nature burst forth in a tempest of indignant denial which alike terrified the accusers, overawed the tribunal, and electrified the assembly. Recounting with breathless fury the chief events of his life, "Where are the men," he cried, in a voice of thunder, "who required to urge Danton in the day of danger?—Who are the beings whose energy he borrowed? Let my accusers appear, and I shall plunge them in that annihilation which shall soon be my lot."† He was here interrupted by the hand-bell of the president, who, agitating this emblem of order, vainly attempted to silence these overpowering accents. "The voice of a man," reiterated Danton "who defends his honour and his life, ought to drown the sound of your signal. We are sacrificed," he continued, "to the ambition of a few cowardly brigands; but they will not long enjoy the fruit of their criminal victory." "I drag," he added, in prophetic strains, "Robespierre with

* Mignet. ii. 59.

† Thiers, vi. 219.

me to the tomb."* Loudly demanding that his accusers should be publicly produced, he on two successive days filled the court and committee with equal alarm and dismay; rallied the sympathy of the people, by the admiration which the courageous efforts of despair seldom fail to excite; and raised in his favour an emotion so powerful that a rumour of an impending insurrection for his rescue, alone secured his condemnation. The privilege of closing the investigation, on the expiry of three days, terminated the fears of the government and the career of its victims, who next morning expired amid the brutal indignities of a mob hired to embitter the agonies of death, as the populace viewed them with silent commiseration. A last request of Danton to take leave of Herault Sechelles, a companion in suffering, was rudely refused; but excited only the reckless reply, that their heads would next moment meet in a revolting receptacle. "Go," he said to the executioner, who interposed to prevent this longed-for farewell, "you are more cruel than death, but you shall not prevent our heads embracing in the bottom of the basket." A momentary tenderness overcame him when thinking of an amiable woman, to whom he had lately been united. "My wife!" he exclaimed, "Oh! my beloved! I shall never see thee more;"† but instantly adding, "Courage, Danton! no weakness!" he died with the serenity of the rest, who seemed to feel no care and know no sorrow. The widows of Hebert and Camille Desmoulins in a few days followed with equal courage to the scaffold; the first, an ancient nun, as an accomplice in the crimes of the former; the other, in the spring of youth and beauty, whose only crime appears to have been that of fondly watch-

CHAP.
VII.

1794.

and Death,
April 15th.

* Thiers, vi. 219.

† Mignet, ii. 60.

CHAP. VII. ing with her children over her husband's life, and tenderly weeping on his death.

1794. 20. On the destruction of the two factions by whom its power had been menaced, the Committee of Public Safety proceeded to concentrate all the authority of the state in itself. Before the arrest of the Hebertists, it had resolved to abridge the despotism of the numerous Jacobin emissaries, whose atrocious acts had in the departments excited general alarm; and to restrain the provincial revolutionary committees, who by their arbitrary levies and oppressive exactions had inspired universal disaffection. The communes of the various towns—for the most part as formidable for ultra-republican violence as the rural authorities were for anti-revolutionary zeal—had already been relieved of their burdens by an act of the Convention, which consolidated their debt with that of the republic; and they were now stripped of their power by the Committee of Public Safety, who either directly assumed this new accession of strength, or indirectly secured it by delegating its control to the subordinate body of General Protection. The whole influence of the provinces having been thus monopolised, a dissolution of the revolutionary army, the suppression of the nominal ministers, and extinction of the formidable clubs, were alone required to render the decemvirs alike omnipotent in Paris. The first of these, or legislative army, levied from the most turbulent brigands of the capital, and, from its origin, more dangerous to the Convention which it was raised to protect, than to the lawless populace whom it was intended to repress—had become needless since the authority of the legislature existed but in name, and no enemies remained for the government either to overawe or to fear; the second was

alike superfluous after the Committee's concentration of authority, and a source of disquietude since the discovery of Vincent's intrigues ; but the third was the most noxious and dangerous of all, as the source from which violence had mainly sprung in times past, and might emanate in future. Against it, accordingly, and the other clubs, the arm of the decemvirs was chiefly raised. A furious address, by St. Just, against pretended foreign enemies within the boundaries of the republic, preceded a fiercer denunciation of the more formidable foes who owed their birth to its soil ; and the approbation with which the submissive legislature received and confirmed a measure for the expulsion of the one, was ominously pregnant with destruction to the other. Similar decrees quickly followed for the abrogation of the ministry, to discharge whose duties twelve new committees were appointed ; and for the dissolution of the obnoxious army, for which the universal terror inspired by the government was a substitute efficient. The Cordelier club, and violent sections—intimidated by the attitude of a government which had laid their leaders in the dust—avoided a like sentence by a voluntary separation ; while the Jacobins, now the only tolerated assembly, were deprived of their power of denunciation, and suffered to exist merely as a tool of the state. On the promulgation of these measures, addresses from all quarters indicated the general concurrence, or submission of the country ; and this approbation increased to enthusiasm, flowing from a source higher, probably also more sincere, when religion was by an ordinance partially restored, and the Deity publicly recognized by a government now omnipotent at home, and triumphant abroad. To Robespierre, who had chiefly contributed to

CHAP.
VII.

1794.

Suppression of
Revolutionary
Army,
Ministry,
and Clubs.

CHAP. VII. eradicate the late impieties of reason, was allotted the task of establishing a new worship of Divinity, in which the principle, but not the practice of Christianity was restored. The Supreme Being, and the immortality of the soul, both of which had been denied during the reign of profanity, were again acknowledged by the legislature; and though the Sabbath, with the ceremonies of the church, was still suppressed, and no ritual instituted, except that which inculcates the moral duties of man, decadal, or tenth days were appointed to celebrate the cardinal virtues of truth, liberty, justice, &c.,* whose symbols were retained though the spirit was forgot. Robespierre had never appeared so eloquent, nor his associates so powerful, as when he introduced, and they in unison established, this new species of religion, in which, on the ruins of atheism, a systematic deism was founded to supersede sectarian divisions; and though humanity may deplore the impurity of its offspring, and the statesman decry its impolicy as a substitute for Christianity, which is perhaps still more powerful as an instrument of human government than as an alleviator of human sorrows, the philosopher may admire the grandeur of a system whose shrine was not upreared in mortal erections, but in an orb of immortal origin; whose oblations were not confined within the narrow range of a church, but proffered in the boundless temple of the universe. The new religion harmonized well for a while with the feelings of the nation, tired of catholicism, disgusted with reason. The greater part of mankind require some superstition to amuse their fancy amid the miseries of life, and to assuage their fear during the agonies of death.

1794.
Restoration of
Religion.

* Thiers, vi. 268.

21. Success in arms had consolidated their power. The capture of Toulon had shed a lustre on the military annals of France, and introduced a hero whose name will for ever glow in the brightest page of her history. Important from its rank as the second naval port, more important still as a point for naval invasion, the utmost efforts of the republic had been directed to subdue this last seat of revolt in the south: but strong by nature, and rendered stronger by art, the town, though distracted by internal dissensions, had, with the aid of several thousand Spanish troops, and a powerful British squadron, successfully resisted the hostile efforts of 12,000 men, who had been despatched from the army of Italy to effect its reduction. On the fall of Lyons, additional forces under Dugommier, an experienced commander, were sent to hasten an event which, notwithstanding the exertions of 30,000 veterans, seemed still distant as ever, while the besiegers defended the town by their bravery, and the English supplied it from their fleet. While victory thus hovered in uncertainty between the combatants, she was arrested by the genius of Napoleon Bonaparte, a young officer whom chance, or the absence of his superior, had invested with the command of the artillery, and whom the channel which divided from France, Corsica, the island of his birth, seemed to have separated from his adopted nation's frivolity as completely as his youth had restrained him from republican crime, and his intellect had raised him beyond modern degeneracy. Four-and-twenty summers had scarcely bronzed his brow, though he appeared imbued with all the grave aspect of age, when the first ray of that intuitive military greatness burst forth, which had hitherto been concealed under a saturnine countenance and

CHAP.
VII.

1793.

Hostilities,
Siege, and
Capture of
Toulon.First ap-
pearance of
Napoleon.

CHAP.
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1793.

subaltern condition, but was destined soon to blaze on the European horizon with a splendour that past generations had not seen, and future will not see. A glance of his searching eyes, as he stood musing by those guns at whose side he remained by day and couched by night, satisfied his reflecting mind that an attack, ineffectual against the extensive line of the walls, would readily secure a fort on an eminence at its extremity ; and this in possession of the besiegers, his revolving judgment foresaw that the town, which it commanded, must either perish or submit. This happily conceived design was no sooner disclosed in a council of war, than adopted ; no sooner adopted than attempted ; nor long attempted ere achieved by the bold hand of its author. Advancing a battery under cover of some trees, he suddenly opened fire against a small fort adjoining, with equal precision and effect, and on obtaining possession of this, employed it to reduce the greater ; repelled a sally of the enemy to seize or spike the destructive guns ; captured O'Hara the British commander in person ; and at midnight gained his object, after a fierce nocturnal conflict which almost hushed a furious elemental tempest that prevailed. The result justified his anticipation. A council of war overruled Sir Samuel Hood's advice to attempt recovery of the forts ; the English squadron and garrison, under Sir Sidney Smith and Lord Mulgrave, with as many of the wretched inhabitants as could escape to the ships, immediately withdrew after having, by the hands of Sir Sydney, set fire to the arsenal and French fleet in the harbour, as dictated by the stern commands of war, and been under the more deplorable necessity of leaving the hapless town a prey to the gally-slaves and brigands, whose ferocity not even the despair and

Dec. 18th.

desolation of the night could repress, or to the more protracted and pitiless visitation of revolutionary vengeance.* On the side of La Vendee, the republic had been almost as triumphant. The eighty thousand miserable peasants, whom devotion to the altar and throne had driven from their homes, after wandering for several weeks from the Loire to Bretagne, and again from the plains of the one to the shores of the other, a prey to hunger, cold, and the diseases which follow in their train, realizing by their wretchedness the expected image of the final day,† alternately victorious and vanquished in conflicts with republican troops scarcely less disorganized and divided by internal dissensions than themselves, had been finally defeated and dispersed; their leaders, Larochejacquelein and Lescure, slain in battle, and themselves scattered and subdued, after vain attempts to reach the ocean, from which, or an English fleet on its bosom, they could now alone expect either safety or relief. Simultaneous success over foreign enemies was calculated to excite a juster joy than any over the hapless sons of the soil. In Belgium, the republican forces had gone into winter quarters; but the Rhine had been the scene of important operations under the auspices of Carnot and St. Just, the latter of whom alternately flew from the armies to the capital, and imparted the same dread energy to both. Hoche had been vanquished in an engagement of three successive days with the Prussians, while attempting to raise the siege of Landau; but instead of rendering his defeat as fatal to himself as it had been to a third of his forces, the Committee of Public Safety, abandoning

CHAP.
VII.

1793.

Vendean
War.

Dec. 23rd.

On the
Rhine.Nov. 28th
to 30th.

* James; Naval History, i. 115-117; London 1822; Toulangeon, iv. 81-88.—Mem. de Napoleon (Montholon's) i. 14-26.

† Lacretelle, xi. 167-8.

CHAP. VII. the pernicious cruelty of consigning unsuccessful commanders to the guillotine, supported their gallant general in adversity, and by investing him with the command of the Rhine and Moselle, enabled him to triumph over the Austrians in turn. The subsequent union of the allies in the vicinity of Wissemburgh might have proved injurious to the French, had it not been rendered innocuous by internal dissensions, which prompted the Austrians to recross the Rhine, and leave Landau free, as well as the republicans in uninterrupted possession of the Palatinate for winter quarters. The operations of the army in Italy had been unimportant, but not unpropitious. The king of Sardinia had been repulsed in an attack upon the French camp, while weakened by detachments to the siege of Toulon, and been forced to return home, distrusting the chances of war. In the Pyrenees alone, had the republic sustained reverses. The French, already defeated in an assault under Dagobert, on the Spanish lines at Truillas, were successively repulsed in similar attempts with more disorganized troops and less experienced leaders, and ultimately routed at Villalongue by Ricardo; but the unenterprising spirit of the Spanish general precluded any important advantage from the victory, and the hostile forces quietly encamped for the winter within sight of each other, on the opposite shores of the Tech, a frontier river.*

1793.
Dec. 22nd.

Italy.

Spain.

Nov. 7th
and 10th.

Preparations for Campaign of 1794.

22. Such was the termination of the campaign of 1793; and if less brilliant than that of the preceding year, when Belgium was subdued and Holland overrun, its victories were established on a more lasting basis. The republic had regained its boundary of the Rhine, and the issue of hostilities had proved

* Jomini, iv. 230-243; Thiers, vi. 61-105.

as advantageous to its cause as their origin had been disastrous. That of 1794 commenced under brighter auspices, and France was about to reap the fruits of the gigantic preparations she had made in the year now numbered with the past. The levy in mass had produced a mighty force of 1,200,000 men; and 700,000 of these were now equipped for the active duties, the rest for the passive avocations of war. Discipline had been communicated to this enormous power by the activity of Carnot, who, by exclusive devotion to his military duties, endeavoured to avoid participating in the crimes of his colleagues. Courage, the most common, but essential quality of a soldier, and of which man is scarcely less susceptible than of fear, had also been imparted to it, by the union of a veteran battalion of the line with two divisions of recent levies; the danger of those panics to which conscripts are subject, being thus diminished by the example of troops inured to the perils of a martial life. The exertions of the capital supplied the infantry with every accoutrement necessary for the field; the zeal of the provinces furnished a formidable body of horse; and the institution of a military school on the banks of the Seine, to which intelligent youths flocked from all parts of the country, afforded an inexhaustible number of officers to both.* Activity was also displayed in the restoration of the navy, which, since the revolution, had been treated with neglect. But here republican energy comparatively failed. A few days may consolidate a regiment, and discipline in a few weeks will constitute a soldier; but the sea is less susceptible to science than the land; months must elapse before the splendid fabric of a ship of war can be reared, and the tempest of years

CHAP.
VII.

1794.

Restora-
tion of the
Navy.

* Jomini, v. 28-30.

CHAP. must have rolled on his head before a man is fit to
 VII. contend with the stormy ocean. Before the outbreak
 1794. of the revolution, fifty vessels of the line, and an
 equal array of frigates* were numbered in the navy of
 France; but neglect, in the interval, had impaired
 their strength, and the conflagration at Toulon
 diminished their number, until scarcely more than
 half now remained, and of these only thirty could
 be trusted to the perils of the sea. Yet by dint of
 exertion, or the impulse of fear, a formidable fleet
 was equipped, and a nucleus for crews found in
 privateers. The prey presented by the mercantile
 ships of England, which diffused wealth on every shore,
 and displayed their sails on every sea, encouraged
 those who had previously been formidable to their
 country as brigands on the land, to become equally
 dangerous to her enemies as corsairs on the deep.
 Full four hundred British merchantmen had been
 captured during the past year, while the republic had
 lost scarcely more than three hundred in return;
 and if the majority on the part of one country seem
 inconsistent with the naval superiority of the other,
 it may be reconciled with probability, by the reflection
 that the commerce of France is limited by her
 position, and was circumscribed by her foe, while
 the flag of England floated in every sphere, and
 unfurled in every breeze; and it is established in
 truth by the indisputable evidence of the respective
 combatants.† In the record of its losses, a nation
 seldom exaggerates calamity. Avarice may prompt
 an individual to conceal his gains, and reveal his
 misfortunes; but fame impels a state to extol its
 triumphs, and extenuate reverses; and though vanity

English
 & French
 Marine
 Losses.

* Thiers, vi. 290.

† See Lord Stanhope's Report, Annual Reg. for 1793; and Thiers, vi. 295.

may sometimes induce the former unduly to increase the extent of his advantages, glory will always prevent the other from fictitiously augmenting the amount of its disasters.

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23. While the republic exhibited activity so energetic, her foreign adversaries had relaxed those exertions which, in the beginning of last campaign, brought such a mighty array into the field, but terminated in a result so abortive at its end. England still remained the soul of the coalition; and Pitt, her despotic chief, pursued his course with rival tyranny at home and enterprise abroad. No longer opposed by Burke—who, under an impulse of revolutionary dread, or the baser motive of pecuniary corruption,* had deserted the principles of freedom, and now raised, in the service of the oppressor, that voice which was wont to thunder against oppression,—and supported by an overwhelming majority in the legislature, to whose venal minds the patronage of the minister presented charms superior to any afforded by the stirring eloquence of Fox, the sarcastic strains of Sheridan, and glowing arguments of Grey and others of his great opponents, the British statesman's hatred to revolution in another country had induced him to trample on the constitution of his own. On the pretext of suppressing a suppositious secret correspondence between the French republicans and some popular clubs in England,—

Prepara-
tions of the
Allies.

England;
Policy of
Pitt.

May 16th.

* He shortly afterwards received a pension of £3000 a year; and, says his biographer, "It rained golden snuff-boxes on him" for some time after the publication of his celebrated and over-rated, as well as exaggerated *Reflections*.—(Preface to his Works, 1834.) On the present occasion Burke concluded a violent declamation by throwing down the rude emblem of a dagger, in confirmation of alleged revolutionary designs in England; but this singular exhibition of theatrical taste merely provoked from Sheridan the jest, "The gentleman has shewn us the knife, but where is the fork?" and produced in the house a smile of derision, instead of the horror it was intended to excite.

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whose actions, though open, were construed into fabulous plots and forged conspiracies,*—the Habeas Corpus Act had been suspended by an overwhelming majority in the House of Commons, and, as naturally anticipated, without a division in the Lords ; while a strenuous effort was made to consign to the scaffold several innocent men whose only crime consisted in demanding that parliamentary reform which the foes of the measure then described as a dangerous innovation, and its friends have since discovered to be a harmless delusion. But though, with the brilliant exception of Fox, and his intellectually great, yet numerically feeble band, the senate was subservient and base, the people were bold and pure, and the inclination of the one was opposed by the determination of the other. The suspension of the nominal buckler of British liberty was counteracted by the more substantial bulwark of an English jury, who, justly considering freedom as their noblest inheritance, averted the shafts of tyranny, interposed between the persecutor and the subjects of persecution ; repelled the panting pursuer, and shielded the intended prey. Foiled in his attempts against enlightened freedom at home, Pitt was next doomed to experience a check to his designs against unbridled liberty abroad. In spite of the indignant opposition of Fox, the stately oratory of Grey, and scorching wit of Sheridan, whose eloquence was never nobler, nor raised in a nobler cause than when employed in denouncing the imposition of burdens on their own country for interference in the internal affairs of another, he had triumphed in all his despotic demands. New taxes were imposed on the burdened inhabitants for the light they enjoyed, and the air they inhaled. Fresh loans

* Sheridan, *Parliamentary Debates*, quoted in *Gifford's Life of Pitt*, ii. 379.

were raised to equip a powerful fleet, and maintain a formidable army unrecognised by the constitution, and uncongenial to the character of England. Additional subsidies, to the extent of several millions sterling,* were lavished on foreign mercenaries; and as in return for all these sacrifices, the British minister had gained merely Pondicherry in the East Indies, and Martinique with other French islands in the West, he could only sustain his exertions by loans raised by a contemporary race to annihilate the power of a future. But though continental despots were eager as ever to barter the blood of their serfs for the bullion of England, they no longer embarked in the cause with the same devotion. They had discovered that resistance to the revolution tended only to increase its violence at home and its victories abroad; and the reverses of the late campaign had both impaired their resources and abated their zeal. The interest of Austria in the combat was gone: she indeed had the loss of a daughter to revenge on the banks of the Seine, but she had land to acquire on the shores of the Vistula. To Prussia, except as an object of sanguinary traffic, the war presented still fewer attractions. The approaching extinction of Poland in the north, contributed to withdraw her from a crusade against revolution in the south; and her vultures were more eager to wrench part of its spoils from the Russian eagle, which, in their absence, had pounced on that ill-fated kingdom, than to crush a tri-coloured flag whose destruction excited no hope of territorial acquisition, nor its existence any fear of domestic infection. Russia herself still affected hos-

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European
Powers;

Austria,

Prussia,

Russia,

* Two millions were granted to the Kings of Prussia and Sardinia alone; thus "paying them," as the opposition said, "for fighting their own battles." —Gifford's Life of Pitt, ii. 313, 345.

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The North-
ern Courts,Southern
States,

Italy,

Spain and
Holland.

tility, and encouraged other powers to attack the republic; but evidently with the sole design of concealing her own ambition, and preventing their participation in the ancient realm whose name had been suddenly erased from the dynasties of Europe. The adjoining courts of Denmark and Sweden persisted in a neutrality beneficial to their commerce; and while their vessels, in common with those of America (which wisely disclaims extrinsic interference), exercised a lucrative trade with French ports, they refused to acquiesce in that blockade of the republic, which the British minister had the boldness to contemplate, and possessed fleets to achieve, if other nations had tolerated the extension to a country of that inactive warfare which is usually confined to the reduction of a city. Switzerland maintained the same course of amicable disposition towards a power whose institutions harmonized nominally with her own, and from whose commerce on shore she derived the same advantage as America, Denmark, or Sweden by sea. The Italian states maintained a reluctant, or impotent, hostility. The Piedmontese were still in arms; and Rome, as well as Naples, were sincere in their enmity; but the power of the one was great only in malediction, and that of the other seemed dependent on the presence of an English fleet. Spain continued hostile, but enfeebled alike in resources and resentment: and though Holland now added fifty ships of the line to the hundred vessels of England,* and the allied powers still retained 400,000 men in the field,† the British minister foresaw that the future burden and glory, or dishonour, of the war must devolve on that country which he seemed destined to ruin, as his sire had been to save.

* Tables and State Papers in Annual Register, 1794. † Jomini, v. 45.

24. The campaign commenced on the side of the Pyrenees, and was soon signalized by a victory, the first of the year, and the first hitherto obtained over the once glorious arms of Spain. Dugommier, an able general, who had acquired recent celebrity as the nominal conqueror of Toulon, though the triumph was secured by the ability of another, had been appointed to succeed Dagobert, a commander, brave but unfortunate, yet entitled to honour, though in the 76th year of his life he displayed enterprise inconsistent with the experience of age. While a younger and more successful officer superseded this veteran, who soon afterwards closed his long career scarcely fuller of years than of glory, in the estimation of those who can admire a brave man in adversity, a less experienced leader, the Count De La Union, had, on the other side, been substituted for Ricardo, who, in the interval of hostilities, had been arrested by the messenger of death. Crossing the Tech, on whose opposite shores the hostile armies had passed the winter, Dugommier surprised the Spanish camp, impregnable in van but unsupported in rear; and, after a sharp combat, compelled the enemy to retreat, leaving him in possession of its strong position, a considerable park of artillery, and 1500 prisoners. On the side of the Alps victory smiled on the French flag, as on that of the Pyrenees. Dumerbion, an old and invalid republican general, commanded in name, but the operations were conducted by a younger chief, whose lofty banner was afterwards to float in regions where modern conqueror never penetrated, and the Roman eagle never flew. Surveying with that rapid but penetrating glance which intuitively discerned the key of Toulon, Bonaparte, whose services in that capture had elevated him from a colonel to a general of brigade, at

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Campaign
of 1794;
Pyrenees,On the
Alps,Victories
of Bonaparte.

CHAP. VII. once observed that the Piedmontese position at Saorgio, though unassailable in front, might be destroyed by an attack on its rear. In this direction,

1794. however, though unstrengthened by art, it was considered to be fortified by the sanctity of nations; as the vulnerable point could be reached only by violation of the neutral Genoese states. But such considerations rarely arrest the career of a conqueror. Executing, with unequalled celerity and unscrupulous decision, a masterly movement through a valley parallel to that at whose extremity the hostile camp was situated, he unhesitatingly infringed the neutrality of Genoa, rapidly traversed its territory, and suddenly assailing the enemy in flank and rear, forced them to abandon their lines and retreat in disorder, with a loss of 3000 prisoners, a numerous park of artillery, and a still greater magazine of all the implements of war. Colloredo, with a division of 10,000 men, was next surprised and defeated by the impetuous Corsican, who, considering these as but the harbingers of future triumphs, had already, from the heights on which he stood, designed and sketched to the younger Robespierre,* a gorgeous plan for the invasion of Italy; but the approaching fall of the elder brother postponed for a time that immortal campaign.

Hostilities
in the
North.

25. In the north, and by the side of the Rhine, the principal field on which life of immortal origin was sacrificed to the petty dissensions of men, victory fluctuated between the combatants before finally joining the ranks of those who, however misguided, fought for their rights. Mack, an Austrian officer, whose specious abilities were conspicuous in courts, though he was equally destitute of a general's capa-

* Thiers, vii. 98.

city and a soldier's courage, had, apparently to conceal cowardice when boldness might be safely displayed, devised a march upon Paris when the attempt was no longer practicable. According to this position, the allied German and English forces of 150,000 in the Netherlands, and an equal number of Austrians, Prussians, and emigrant battalions in Luxemburg, Mentz, and the vicinity of the Rhine, were to seize Landrecy, or some strong point in the north, and, concentrating their forces, march upon the capital, while two strong divisions in Flanders and the opposite line of the Sambre, should protect their flank, and a British fleet annoy the enemy by another invasion on the coast of La Vendee in the west. But such a scheme, feasible in the early part of last campaign, whilst the Vendean were victorious, and the republicans either vanquished in foreign conflict or distracted by civil strife, was no longer possible since the former had been suppressed or confined to a few troops of roving brigands, and the latter were triumphant in battle, as well as established in power and protected by an army numerically superior. The design on the city was accordingly abandoned; the aim of the campaign limited to that human extermination which seems the chief object of war; and, bent on mutual destruction, each party prepared to gratify its appetite for blood.

26. A few changes had taken place among the commanders who were to conduct the respective combatants to carnage. On the side of the French, Pichegru, a general of experience and intrepidity, possessed of military intelligence, but destitute of republican devotion, had been appointed to command the great army of the north. Michaud, an officer without celebrity or capacity, supplied his place in that of the

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his projected
invasion.

New Commanders.

Pichegru,

Michaud.

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Jourdan.

Rhine; and on the Moselle, Jourdan, a brave but cautious commander, superseded the ardent yet sagacious Hoche, who now expiated in prison his recent defeat, while Pichegru reaped the laurels of his subsequent triumph. On that of the allies, the Prince of Saxe Coburg still commanded in chief; Clairfayt and the Duke of York, in divisions. Brunswick had retired in consequence of dissensions at the end of last campaign; but the loss of his ability was compensated by the zeal of the German Emperor, who repaired in person to the camp in the Netherlands, either to prevent future discord, or to afford paternal encouragement to his subjects in slaughter.

Hostilities.

27. The operations commenced on the side of the French, who were defeated by the Austrians on the Helpe, but in a few days triumphed in Flanders in their turn. Landrecy fell into the hands of the allies in consequence of the one; Menin was the republican acquisition from the other. Chappins, with a division of the revolutionary forces, sustained a disastrous repulse by the Duke of York at Cambray; but the English commander soon experienced the vicissitudes of war in revulsion, in a surprise and defeat, from which he escaped only by the swiftness of his horse; and gloried in publishing his flight,* as men will often affect to glory in acts which they cannot conceal. But with like unimportant marches and counter-marches, partial engagements and petty advantages—all conducive solely to homicide and desolation—it were now equally vain and revolting to swell the page of history. The genius of Carnot, or the talent of his generals, at length terminated the abortive effusion of blood; and a design of the allies to surround and destroy the French army at Lille,

* See his Letter, in State Papers of Ann. Reg. 1794.

disastrously recoiled on themselves. The new system, and immense levies of the republic, rendered victory secure and defeat unavailing. Fast as its soldiers fell, fresh troops were marched to the frontier to supply their places in battle; so that the enemy, even if victorious, must ultimately have been exhausted by slaughter. Profuse in the sacrifice of her sons, the government of France resolved to spare no longer the lives of her foes. A decree of the Convention, rapidly following that which imposed conquest or death on its generals, denied quarter to every Englishman captured in the field, and to all the allies who resisted beyond twenty-four hours, after being summoned to surrender, in garrison: but the magnanimity of the Duke of York, who, in a proclamation,* eloquently reprobated and refused to retaliate such wanton ferocity, frustrated the one; and the French officers themselves, by postponing their summons till the besieged were on the eve of falling,† evaded the other. This high-minded conduct obviated, and success eventually superseded, an aggravation, so needless, of the calamities of war. After various vicissitudes on either side, easily surmounted on the part of the French, whose supplies were daily reinforced, but irreparable on that of their opponents, who drew theirs with difficulty from a distance, the republican troops, early in the summer, were masters of maritime Flanders and the whole of the Austrian Netherlands, for which they were indebted to incapacity and dissensions in the coalized forces, not less than to the intrepidity of their own. A few weeks subsequently, the strongholds of Landrecy, Valenciennes, Condé, and Quesnay, which had cost the

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Reign of
Terror in
the Army.Re-capture
of Land-
recy.
Aug. 27th,
to 31st.

* State Papers, Ann. Reg. 1794, p. 169.

† Thiers, vi. 287.

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Battle of
Fleurus.

June 26th.

Lord
Howe's
Naval Vic-
tory on
1st of June.

allies so much, fell into the hands of the French without a struggle. In proportion as the efforts and resources of the invaders failed, the vigour and discipline of the invaded increased; and if the commonwealth presented a degrading aspect at home, she preserved a dignified attitude abroad. Now for the first time in her annals was to be seen the splendid spectacle of a hundred thousand men marching to battle with all the regularity of parade.* With seventy-five thousand of such troops Jourdan, who on the previous day had captured Charleroy, encountered the Prince of Saxe Coburg at Fleurus; and though Austrian valour disputed the ground foot by foot with republican courage, and the loss—nearly ten thousand in all—on each side was equal,† all the benefit of the carnage remained with the French; and Pichegru, with other republican generals, having been equally successful, the enemy soon afterwards retired beyond the Rhine, leaving the republic in possession of its long-disputed boundary.

28. But while victory smiled on the arms of the republic by land, she conspicuously supported its great opponent on the ocean. The British laurels, sullied by the incapacity of a royal commander on shore, received a deathless wreath from the intrepidity of a noble admiral on the deep. On the 20th of May the French fleet, amounting to thirty sail of the line, commanded nominally by the Admiral Villaret Joyeuse, but under the orders of Jean-Bon-St. André, now a republican pro-consul, had left Brest for the purpose of convoying a large body of merchantmen, anxiously expected from the West Indies, laden with provisions, so desirable during the present dearth in France, and expected to convey intelligence

* Jomini, vi. 138.

† Ibid., p. 150; and Toulangeon, iv. 337.

not less eagerly anticipated in consequence of the terrible atrocities to which the revolution had there-
given birth. Beneath the burning sun of the west, the new-born passion for liberty had, it will be remembered, burst out with a fury unknown in the colder clime of the east; and horrible as were the crimes perpetrated in its name in the old world, they had been surpassed by the vengeance of its licentious votaries in the new. In St. Domingo, the principal colonial possession of France, the cause of the revolution had been embraced with alacrity by the white population, in expectation that it would liberate them from foreign dominion; and by the mulattoes, in the hope of thus obtaining absolution from the social bondage imposed on all in whom the blood of the negro flowed. Between the parties thus combating for political and civil rights, dissensions had eventually assumed the aspect of hostility; and, profiting by their division, the slaves, who groaned equally under the oppression of both, had risen and revenged their sufferings with fearful retribution. Without distinction of age, sex, or condition, their former masters had been massacred, or consigned with their plantations to the flames, and the greater part of the once blooming island converted into a scene of devastation, when the Convention attempted to restore order by the indiscriminate manumission of the slaves. The issue of this measure, and the benefit anticipated, were hitherto unknown; and, to protect the fleet pregnant with such hopes and fears, the regenerated navy of France now encountered the veteran reliance of England. During several days the hostile ships, numbering twenty-six on either side,* had been cruising off the French coast; one

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* James, *Nav. Hist.* i. 204; Thiers, vi. 322.

CHAP. VII. to intercept, the other to convoy the expected squadron. Partial engagements, interrupted by mists and stormy seas, had ensued between them, attended with little advantage on either side; but at last, on the morning of the 1st of June, the sun burst out with unclouded splendour, and disclosed to the expectant crews two of the noblest armaments that ever rode the main. Bearing down on the French fleet, Lord Howe, the commander of the British—who on the previous day had gained the advantage of that weather-gage which generally becomes the prize of the ablest tacticians at sea—broke the enemy's line; detached one-half of their ships, and after an hour's engagement forced the other to retire; leaving ten or twelve sail of the line in possession of the English, but so dismantled that six only were conveyed in triumph to their ports, the others having either sunk shortly after the action,* or escaped from the victors, who, in consequence of the French fire against their rigging, and of their own remissness,† were almost as disabled as *thé* vanquished. Three days after the battle, the Indian fleet, for whose sake it had been

* Popular tradition narrates, and a contemporary historian has credulously recorded, a fictitious incident in this combat, which a surviving actor in the scene has denied, and the stern voice of truth must reject. "The heroism of the crew of the *Vengeur*," says Alison, in his *History of Europe*, (vol. ii. p. 371,) "is worthy of eternal remembrance. Though sinking rapidly in the water, and after the lower deck guns were immersed, they continued vehemently to discharge the upper tier, and at length, *when she went to the bottom, the crew continued to cheer*, and the cries *Vive la Republique! Vive la Liberté! Vive la France!* were heard as she was swallowed up in the waves." Earl Howe's despatch after the engagement, and the best authorities on naval events, while they bear honourable testimony to the gallant resistance of the French, contradict this self-refutatory assertion; and an officer, present in the action, has recently corroborated their report that the vessel sank shortly after the surrender of the crew, many of whom, however, the British were unable to save.—(See Letter of — Griffiths, Rear-Admiral, to the Editor of "*The Sun*" newspaper, Oct. 12th, 1838.)

† London Gazette, June 11th, 1794.

fought, reached the scene of action; and its commander, justly surmising from the wrecks with which the sea was covered that a great naval battle had been fought, and that the conquerors could not in their crippled condition arrest his progress,* steered directly for the French harbours, which he gained in safety. With this, however, ceased the good fortune of the republic on the ocean. Pondicherry, and all her possessions in the Eastern Indies; Gaudaloupe, St. Lucie, Martinique, with the rest of her islands in the West, submitted to the arms of Britain, now as omnipotent on sea as France was by land.

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29. Meanwhile Paris was a scene of desolation, terror, and despair. Despite the utmost efforts of the municipality, the supply of provisions had so failed that each family obtained only half a pound of animal food every fifth day for the support of life; and notwithstanding all the exertions of the government to raise the value of the national currency, the *assignats* were again depreciated by a new issue of a milliard of francs (£40,000,000), to defray the enormous expenses of the war.† Great as this addition was to an existing debt already equivalent to three hundred and twenty millions of British money, it proved inadequate to the expense of equipping thirty ships of the line for sea, and of maintaining twelve hundred thousand men on land. A forced contribution, amounting to four millions sterling, was imposed on the richer citizens to supply the deficiency.‡

Events in
Paris.

June 2nd,
1796.

30. But though the necessities of a state may palliate the spoliation of its subjects, no justification can be offered for private rapine by its servants. The

Increase of
Terror and
Revolutionary
Violence.

* Thiers, vi. 327.

† Ibid., vi. 336.

‡ Ibid.

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levy exacted by the government was tender in operation, and possibly trifling in amount, in comparison to that extorted by a police, composed chiefly of the Convention's disbanded revolutionary guard, and infinitely more noxious in their new capacity of civil despotism than in their late condition of military dominion. With the authority of licensed robbers, these agents combined the more despicable avocation of public spies ; and, endowed with unlimited power to arrest all who had excited either their indignation or their avarice, they permeated every quarter of the city, filling the prisons with victims, and the inhabitants with dismay. Those dismal regions of despair had now acquired a new aspect of terror. The characteristic national gaiety, formerly displayed in their gloomy recesses, was seen no longer. The recreations by which the prisoners had attempted to alleviate their misery having been forbidden, silence and sadness now reigned alone. The wretched inmates, confined in crowded cells and nurtured with loathsome food, were studiously deprived of every solace until death relieved them from their earthly sufferings. The terrors of the Revolutionary Tribunal were increased in proportion. Its victims were now consigned in scores to the guillotine ; and fast as the prisons were thus cleared, they were replenished by new proscriptions. Seven or eight thousand wretched beings continually awaited its sentence ; victims of every degree, and every grade of guilt and innocence, experienced its fury, and were indiscriminately delivered to the axe. Men of science, belonging to no party, but claimed by the world as its own, and over whose heads the storms of foreign war and internal strife, in civilized communities, alike roll innocuous, were enrolled in the

number of the victims. The great and unfortunate Lavoisier,* in the midst of a brilliant career of discovery in an interesting branch of natural philosophy, was, on some frivolous pretext of depreciating the public funds, consigned with a troop of fellow-sufferers to the guillotine.

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31. But this homicidal era was drawing to a close. Even in the most debased times of national degradation, men will be found to vindicate the claims of humanity and revenge the wrongs of their species. In proportion as despots overawe a prostrate people, they become exposed to individual danger; and though terror may shield them from public wrath, vigilance rarely secures them from private resentment. Impelled by such sentiments, which posterity must consecrate and history cannot condemn, a stranger, named L'Admiral, had resolved to imitate the example of Charlotte Corday, and sacrifice his life by an attempt on that of the chief oppressor of his country. Hesitating for some time between Robespierre and Collot D'Herbois, as the object more worthy of his vengeance, he at last selected the former as the chief of the government, though the other surpassed him in ferocity: but fate, or the timely absence of Robespierre, interposed between the assassin and his prey; and after lingering a whole day near the saloon of the Committee without encountering the object of his search, he assailed Collot D'Herbois at midnight while ascending the stair of his residence. Chance again saved the intended victim: the powder in the weapon failed to ignite: a second pistol was drawn with the same

Attempt to
Assassinate Ro-
bespierre
and Collot
D'Herbois.

* The author of some of the greatest discoveries in modern Chemistry. He in vain interceded for a few days' delay, to complete an interesting experiment.

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result; a third discharged its contents harmlessly on the wall, and a fourth wounded an obscure citizen who attempted to seize the assailant. A similar design against the life of Robespierre, next day, was equally abortive; and the presumed assassin, a young female who had repaired to his dwelling with a parcel of apparel in which two knives were enveloped, was, along with L'Admiral and a priest who had been heard to express regret for their failure, hurried to the guillotine; the one undoubtedly guilty, though of the designs of the other no proof was adduced beyond her declared curiosity "to see how a tyrant was made." * These unsuccessful efforts of despair only led (as they generally lead) to the result of increasing the power of those whose existence they were designed to abridge; and presented an opportunity, eagerly seized by the Jacobins and creatures of Robespierre, to extol his importance and asperse the British premier, to whom the frustrated attack, as well as another fatal to the republican envoy at Rome, and even the murder of Marat, was attributed: and afforded his flatterers a pretext for the proposition of a guard for his and the Committee's protection. But the dangerous suggestion was rejected by the object of their adulation, who knew that such a measure could not secure his safety, and that in a popular government, whether real or affected, external symbols of power tend only to diminish internal strength.

Dissen-
sions in the
Govern-
ment.

32. Intestine dissensions accelerated an event which open violence thus for a moment arrested. The Committee of Public Safety had long been divided into two parties, one of which, superintended by Carnot, controlled the power of the state; while

* Lacroix, Hist. Pécis. ii. 162.

the other, under the auspices of Robespierre, enforced the evolution of its principles. The affairs of war, and the triumphs of the republic, exclusively devolved, and were deservedly due, to the former; the instigation of those violent measures and judicial massacres which had raised universal terror, was as justly attributed to the latter. The associates of the one, only two or three in number, including Robert Lindsey and Cambon, were almost as secluded as himself from the crimes of the Committee; but Couthon and St. Just, the confederates of the other, were, if possible, more sanguinary than their leader. The first of these, the venerable miscreant Couthon, was now the obsequious instrument of Robespierre; and, to support his designs, disgustingly paraded a paralytic infirmity in the hall of the Jacobins, for the purpose of exciting compassion, and thus enlisting the sympathy of an audience whose feelings might otherwise have revolted from the hideous spectacle of maxims of blood blandly inculcated in the paternal accents of age. The second was not less distinguished for his devotion to Robespierre than for the violence of his principles and the energy with which he enforced them. But Billaud Varrennes, an envious ascetic, and Collot D'Herbois, a declaiming debauchée, though rivals of the others in ferocity, were already alienated from his cause, and disposed to join his enemies by envy of his power, or dread of his resentment, rather than from indisposition to his crimes; while Barrère, the able but unprincipled recorder of the Committee, and subservient agent of all, though at present, from the timidity of his disposition,* equally ready to devote his peculiar talent in the composition of state reports to enunciate revolutionary principles in the

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* Mignet, ii. 71.

CHAP. cabinet, announce victories in the field, or consign
VII. victims to the scaffold, was prompted by the same

1794. motive, and the moderation of his temper,* to desert it with the first ebb of success. The recent exaltation of Robespierre, whose power was now acknowledged on every side, and his name pronounced by every lip, had excited their envy; his undisguised contempt had raised their indignation, and his unscrupulous malignity aroused their fear. The fate of Danton and others, once friends of his bosom or minions of his will, presented an ominous presage of their own; and the rest of the Committee began to consider the existence of the designing dictator as incompatible with their own security. The rival Committee of General Safety and the Convention also participated in the danger, and in the determination to avert it; the former in resentment of the abridgment of its power and compulsory submission to that of Public Safety, effected chiefly through the instrumentality of Robespierre; the latter, from motives of self-preservation, and in revenge of its most gifted members, who had been pursued to the grave by his virulence.

Designs of
Robes-
pierre.

Irritated by some sarcasms to which he had been exposed during a recent ceremony in honour of the Supreme Being—when, while studiously walking at a distance in front of his colleagues, he was reminded of the Tarpeian rock's proximity to the capitol, as an emblem of the uncertainty of his power,† and by the obloquy he received from implication in a new superstition, of which an aged female fanatic, named Catherine Theot, who called herself the Mother of God, and hailed Robespierre as her adopted son and chief prophet,‡ was the principal actor—he resolved to expunge the insult with the blood of the insulters;

* Mignet, ii. 71.

† Thiers, vi. 379.

‡ Lacretelle, xi. 60.

and with this view, to increase the power of the Revolutionary Tribunal, and immolate his foes on its shrine, he extorted from the legislature a decree which rendered the lives of the highest member of the senate and humblest subject of the state alike insecure. By this frightful ordinance, which, through Couthon's instrumentality, he introduced without the cognizance of his colleagues,* and substantiated in spite of opposition in the chamber, the terrors of this formidable court were fearfully augmented. Twelve judges and fifty jurymen, nominees of his own, were appointed to fulfil and relieve each other in the work of destruction, which was henceforth to proceed without interruption, as a section, or fourth part, sat each day; without delay, as moral evidence was substituted for material proof; and without mitigation, as death was now the only penalty. "Nothing now remains for us but to blow out our brains,"† said Ruamps, a member of the legislature; and the result realized his prediction. Armed with this Draconian law, the execution of which was entrusted to creatures of his will, Robespierre resolved to withdraw for a short time from the scene, in the hope of exterminating his enemies by its action, of destroying the popularity of his colleagues by its odium, and of returning to power on the ruin of both, when, by the substitution of comparative leniency for this unbridled ferocity, his assumption of supremacy would be rather hailed by the nation than opposed. He executed his resolution, unwarned by the recent fate of Danton, and without suspecting that the temporary retirement, which in the instance of his rival resulted from luxurious inertia, and in his own, from unprincipled ambition, would prove equally fatal to himself. But

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Increase of
Revolutionary
Tribunal's
Power.Retirement
of Robes-
pierre.

* Thiers, vi. 381.

† Mignet, ii. 76.

CHAP. VII. he failed in his design. Imprudence is sometimes corrected by experience, and present folly prevented
 1794. by the recollection of former faults; but in the career of mankind and the history of nations, the delusive prospects of the future more frequently obliterate the unerring admonitions of the past; and it is fortunate for the world that crime is thus held in curb.

Judicial
Massacres
in Paris.

33. His retreat was signalized by a series of massacres, in comparison to which all prior judicial immolations were trifling in extent, and merciful in degree. Though some members of the Committee secretly opposed, and others reluctantly assented to his recent decree, all must be considered participators in his guilt, either from passive submission to its enactment, or, as in the instance of Couthon, from active co-operation in its execution. By the instrumentality of this aged wretch, who remained at his post as the ready tool of Robespierre, and the exertions of Fouquier Tinville, the public accuser, who was equally eager to second all in the commission of cruelty, preparations for murder were made on a scale so gigantic, that, were it not substantiated in horrid reality, reason would revolt, as much as humanity recoils at the recital. The hall where the dread tribunal sat was stripped of the benches which had formerly been erected for the convenience of the accused or the accommodation of their counsel, and converted into an amphitheatre where a hundred and fifty or two hundred prisoners might be ranged and tried simultaneously; and the intention of Tinville at once to consign this number to the guillotine was averted only by the interposition of the Committee, one of whom, Collot D'Herbois, objected that the instrument of death would be thus "demoralized."*

* Thiers, vi. 389.

. The victims were accordingly brought up in divisions of fifty; and on the evening of each day, or the morrow of the next, hurried to eternity. The proceedings of the court were distinguished by the same fearful rapidity as its punishment. In most cases only the name or designation of the accused was demanded by the president, before consignment to the waggons which conveyed them to death. In many instances innocence was punished for the delinquencies of guilt; and, though apprized of the fatal injustice, the judges refused revocation of the sentence. Fathers died for the acts of their sons, sons for the deeds of their fathers. One man expiated with his life the inadvertence of replying to the name of another; and a by-stander was enrolled in the devoted band for correcting the deadly error.* On the mere denunciation of wretches who were employed as spies in the jails, and engaged in a disgusting traffic of blood, fifty or sixty hapless prisoners, from whom plunder could no more be extorted, were each day cited to appear before the tribunal, and ere another revolution of the sun they atoned with their heads for their poverty. Each afternoon these miscreants permeated the prisons with pencil in hand, and selected their victims for the approaching day. The term "Evening Journal" was applied to the list of those thus devoted; and the dismal document was eagerly sought by the prisoners, who were often for the first time so apprized of their impending doom. Their friends, yet at liberty, purchased with equal alacrity; and so completely had these daily atrocities obliterated the feelings of the populace, that urchins openly vended copies in the streets, exclaiming, "Here are the persons who have drawn prizes in the lottery of

* Lacretelle, xii. 32.

- CHAP. VII.** the holy guillotine.* Nor was such levity confined to those who might soon receive the fatal summons in their turn. Individuals ordained to obey the deadly command displayed the same characteristic buoyancy.
1794. **Execution of Malascherbes;** Malascherbes, the venerable head of an illustrious house, condemned nominally for sheltering an emigrant, but in reality for his defence of Louis XVI., having stumbled while going to the guillotine, with nearly a score of his race, coolly remarked, "This is a bad omen, a Roman would have turned back;"† and many subsequent sufferers imitated, or surpassed, his gaiety in death. Marshal Luckner and General Biron died with like intrepidity; and, subdued by admiration or emulation, the generally impressive scene of life merging in mortality was divested of all its terrors. The people with equal indifference beheld the sister of a king, the princess Elizabeth, expiate her emigrant correspondence, and natural affection, on the same scaffold with the menial of an artisan convicted of anti-revolutionary opinions;‡ and preserved their apathy in the midst of a torrent of destruction which, in less than forty days, numbered nearly fourteen hundred with the dead, and surpassed in atrocity the massacres of Marius and proscriptions of Sylla.
- of Princess Elizabeth.** 34. The provinces were still more than Paris deluged with blood. The acts of the Convention's representatives in the country far outvied in cruelty the atrocities committed in the capital in the legislature's name. In the north, Joseph Lebon, an ex-priest, entered on a career of homicide with the malignity of a monk and the fury of a madman.
- Provincial Massacres, of Lebon,**

* Thiers, vi. 392.

† Lacretelle, xi. 407.

‡ Hundreds of tailors, shoemakers, barbers, butchers, bakers, common mechanics, &c. were executed for reputed anti-revolutionary sentiments.—Thiers, vi. 396, 397.

Attended by a body of perambulating judges and an itinerant guillotine, he extended his ravages over an extensive district, and committed the most frightful murders in the midst of orgies still more revolting. At Arras the executioner was publicly entertained at his table, and (says a contemporary historian) treated with great distinction.* On days of festivity an orchestra was stationed by the side of the guillotine; and amidst the strains of music, mingled with the groans of the dying, he counselled the surrounding females to throw themselves into the arms of their lovers and obey the impulse of nature.† In Cambray, he personally assisted at the executions, raised a song of *Ca Ira* while his victims were expiring, and eventually displayed such ferocious insanity, that it became incumbent on the Convention to denounce, and on the Committee to remove and admonish him to “evince more dignity in his future operations;” but his career was not arrested until he had inspired such terror that his mission was compared to an apparition of the Furies dreaded in the days of Paganism.‡ Lyons, Bourdeaux, Toulon, and other cities of the south, presented similar scenes of atrocity. In the first, nearly 1700 of the wretched inhabitants expired on the guillotine; and in the last, 200 miserable beings were cut down by grape-shot. “I have seen,” says another chronicler, “forty-five magistrates of the parliament of Paris, and thirty-three of that of Toulouse, marching to death with the same serenity as they formerly displayed in their magisterial processions. Women were thrown in crowds into prison, from which the youngest, the fairest, and most interesting, departed in dozens to the scaffold.

* Thiers, vi. 404.

† Chateaubriand, *Etud. Hist.*, i. 243.‡ Prudhomme, quoted *Etud. Hist.*, i. 243.

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Carrier,

The
Noyades.

Young soldiers, and old generals, also marched in silence; they knew only how to die."* But these horrors were insignificant in extent when compared to those perpetrated by a youthful monster, named Carrier, in Nantes and La Vendee. Disregarding the promise of quarter to those who surrendered, this miscreant shot the subdued peasants in bands of several hundreds at a time. Neither sex nor age was spared; and whole villages were depopulated. Eighty women, many of them pregnant, others with babes at their breasts, were thus massacred at once; and five hundred children of both sexes, the eldest of whom had not exceeded fourteen years, were conducted to the same place to be shot. "Never," says an eye-witness, "was a spectacle more harrowing and terrible. The littleness of some caused them to escape the shots that flew over their heads. They ran and clung to the limbs of their executioners, imploring pity with looks of innocence and terror; but nothing could soften their exterminators, who killed them at their feet."† Whole generations were thus, by this miscreant's orders, swept away in an hour; and when the air became infected by the number of the slain, Carrier gloried in averting a threatened epidemic, by the horrible expedient of drowning future victims in the Loire. Ninety priests in a scuttled barge were made the subjects of experiment; and when the waters, closing on their heads, quickly realized his atrocious anticipation, thousands of men, women, and children, were inclosed in the holds of ships, with artificial openings, and successively committed to the deep. Vessels with false bottoms, or trap sides, which opened at a given signal, were eventually constructed

* Riouffe, *Memoire d'un Detenu*, quoted *Etud. Hist.*, 242, 243.

† Prudhomme, *ibid.* 243.

on purpose for these Noyades, or drownings, unparalleled in the annals of human crime; and the massacres terminated only when the water had been rendered as noxious as the land, and the fishes of the river had been poisoned, as the birds of prey had been nauseated by gorging on human food.*

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35. Universal consternation succeeded to the general indifference with which these massacres at first were regarded; and unequivocal abhorrence was quickly manifested against a system of extermination from which the highest were not safe, nor the humblest exempt. Sixty members of the Convention trembled by day, and abandoned their homes by night, lest they should in the interval be seized by the remorseless public accuser and consigned to his fatal tribunal before the chamber could interpose protection. The Committee of General Safety was in equal alarm, in consequence of a rumour that Robespierre and Couthon had demanded the heads

Conse-
quences of.

* The following dismal list of revolutionary victims is given by Chateaubriand, on the authority of Prudhomme, (*Etud. Historique*, Preface, p. 241.)

Ex-nobles	1,278	
Female nobility	750	
Wives of labourers and artisans	1,467	
Nuns	350	
Plebeians of various ranks	13,633	
		18,613
Women, died of premature parturition	3,400	
„ during pregnancy and parturition	348	
„ killed in La Vendee	15,000	
Infants ditto	22,000	
Died in ditto	900,000	
		1,040,748
Destroyed at Lyons	31,000	
Victims of Carrier, at Nantes.	32,000	
Including children shot	500	
„ „ drowned	1,500	
„ women shot	264	
„ „ drowned	500	
„ priests shot	300	
„ „ drowned	460	
Nobles drowned	1,404	
Artisans ditto	5,300	

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of a majority of its members; and even that of Public Safety was disquieted by the insidious orations of the former in the hall of the Jacobins, where, notwithstanding his prolonged absence from the cabinet, he daily attended and addressed the obsequious club in strains which announced the approach of a struggle that should prove fatal either to his colleagues or himself. The inhabitants of the capital displayed commiseration for the victims, by closing their windows during the procession of the dismal cavalcades, which now daily proceeded to the place of execution in mournful silence; and those of the country were restrained only by the universal terror from expressing detestation of the cruelties which Robespierre had originated, and entailed on others the odium of enacting. Nor were the assassins themselves free from the fear they inspired. Robespierre, naturally timid and suspicious, had now become gloomy and distrustful.* He was invariably surrounded by a band of devoted Jacobins, armed with bludgeons, whenever he appeared in public, or gratified in private that insatiable vanity whose public indulgence was dangerous. Terror, not less than policy, had also constrained him to institute a secret police, to provide for his own protection, as well as counteract the schemes of the government, and watch the movements of his rivals. Dumas, the ferocious President of the Revolutionary Tribunal, daily sat armed with pistols, in court; and Tinville, the still more pitiless accuser, though callous to all other human emotions, was the slave of ceaseless terror, or an insupportable conscience which pursued him day and night with untiring reproach. Their subordinate minions were equally alarmed; and the

* Mignet, ii. 84.

nation awaited with impatience, the result of a contest that should crush one of the factions by which it had so long been crushed. The combatants alone shrank from a strife, in which success appeared uncertain, and destruction sure. A mutual attempt was made to reconcile their differences ; but it only evinced their general dislike, or their individual dread, and was rendered abortive by the truculence of Robespierre, who insisted that the heads of his opponents should fall. The chiefs of the Committee of Public Safety being included in the list,* the government firmly resisted his demand, deeming it a prelude to the loss of their own. Negotiation having failed, each party prepared for a conflict ; the Committee supported by the reviving spirit of the Convention, and the triumph of its arms ; its opponent relying on the Jacobin club and the commune of Paris, both of which had again upreared their formidable heads.

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36. Success might have attended the cause of Robespierre, had he given the signal to engage whilst the Jacobins were eager to obey, and Henriot, the profligate commander of the armed forces of Paris, was ready to execute his orders. The chief of these urged an immediate attack. "Dare," said St. Just, "that is the secret of revolutions."† But the maxim of Robespierre was to strike stealthily and strongly. His timidity impelled him to avoid an encounter, though delay hourly increased the strength of his adversaries, and the peril of his adherents. While he trusted to the force of defamation, and shrank from decisive action, the power of the government was daily augmented by victories abroad, and the returning courage of the Convention at home. All his efforts to depopularize the Com-

The Result.

* Mignet, ii. 85.

† Ibid., p. 88.

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mittee by his absence from the cabinet, or to depreciate it by insidious orations in the club, were frustrated by the successive triumphs of the republican generals Pichegru and Macdonald, over Clairfayt, the Austrian commander, followed by the capture of Ypres, the surrender of Charleroy, the return of the emperor, the retreat of his army, and the occupation of Brussels, as well as acquisition of great part of the Netherlands, by the French. Advantages so decisive no disparagement could decry; and though St. Just was hastily recalled from the army to impugn the operations of Carnot, whose designs frequently failed when conceived at a distance, the attempt proved futile as the efforts of Robespierre's secret police to circumvent the manœuvres of Fouché, a consummate intriguer, by whose agency the other members of the Convention corresponded and expected to mature their resistance. Superstition also contributed to increase his embarrassment and accelerate his fall. The arrest of Catherine Theot, and a number of her disciples, who avowedly were under Robespierre's protection, was ominous of the decreasing terror he inspired; and a letter addressed to her "cherished son," which was found in the bed of the "Almighty's Mother,"* was eagerly seized by Barrère as an opportunity for overwhelming the whole sect, projector, prophet, and proselytes, in profane but piercing ridicule. These unimportant, but significant events betrayed to the public the existence of internal divisions in the government, the extent of which had already been suspected, but was hitherto unknown; and they exerted their wonted influence on the majority of mankind, who invariably unite with the strongest. But they

* Thiers, vi. 419.

failed to subdue the pride or malignity of Robespierre; and, after a second attempt to avert a rupture, which was again frustrated by his imperious tone and sanguinary terms, the gage of hostility was publicly thrown down; the disappointed dictator resolving to begin, the dread-struck Committee determined to await the attack.*

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37. But the time now approached when the gloomy tyrant, who had so long trampled on the liberties of his country, was to sink under the reviving spirit of legitimate authority. Repairing to the hall of the Jacobins, he furiously denounced Fouchè, nominally on pretext of suspected peculation at Lyons, but in reality for participation in the present designs of the Convention; and when the wily agent, by appealing to the legislature, dexterously avoided the danger of citation to the club, his expulsion, which followed, was the harbinger of the storm that had forty days impended the political horizon. A Jacobin petition, concocted by Robespierre, and received in silence by the senate, was an indication of the nearer approach of the tempest, which, at last burst out in full fury, when he, next day, delivered in the chamber one of those ominous orations that generally preceded his designs. No longer hailed by the acclamations of an obsequious audience, his protracted speech, loaded with laudations of himself, depreciation of the committees, and concluding with an insidious but imperative demand for their renovation, was delivered amid uninterrupted stillness; and instead of being ordered, as formerly, to be printed for distribution throughout the country, it was coldly referred to the consideration of the authorities he accused. Depressed by this reception, and furious with rage,

Arrest of
Robes-
pierre and
his Asso-
ciates.

* Mignet, ii. 85.

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he hastened to the Jacobins, where the adulations of his creatures, and their expulsion of his colleagues, in some degree restored the pride which the silence of the chamber had wounded, and a repetition of his address, in some measure, secured that publicity which the senate had withheld. But the triumph was transitory. On the following day, the Convention, increasing in confidence, decreed the arrest of Henriot and his confederates, for a contemplated attack on the committees ; and refused to listen to a report by St. Just, in whose eloquence, and his own, Robespierre still fatally confided. A scene of unprecedented violence ensued. Tallien, formerly a fierce revolutionist, but now seduced to the cause of moderation by the charms of a lately wed wife, in whom all the elegance and amenity of her sex were blended, had proceeded with others to the chamber, determined either to baffle the tyrant, or to die on its floor. This resolute band Robespierre, assuming a position in front of the bar, in vain attempted to silence by his language, and intimidate by his looks. A cry, "Down with the dictator !" was raised on every side ; and his voice drowned by the noise of the president's bell. He rushed to the rostrum, and appealed to the right ; no reply was made : he attempted to address the left ; but the sound of the bell, and the storm in the hall, again subdued his accents. "President of assassins !" he exclaimed to Thuriot, "I demand to be heard ;" but his demand was unheeded. He found not, as he had never extended, sympathy ; and, dispirited by the withering repulse, he returned to his seat. Before resuming it he essayed another ineffectual appeal ; but his faltering voice and foaming lips refused their functions ; and, exhausted by rage and fatigue, he sank down, with the exclamation, " 'Tis the blood of Danton that

chokes thee," ringing in his ears.* St. Just, stern and serene alike amid peace or alarm, displayed greater self-possession; but the assembly refused him the privilege of speech; and, after a furious denunciation by Barrère, who repaired to the chamber provided with two hostile reports, prepared to crush either party when defeated,† eventually consigned him, with the two Robespierres, Couthon, and an associate, named Lebas, who, like the younger Robespierre, requested to be enrolled in the list, to the tribunal by which so many of their victims had been immolated.

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38. Wearied by a stormy scene which endured from the dawn till the approaching close of day, the Convention, whose members, including Mountain and Plain, had vied with each other in execrating falling tyranny, and hailing returning freedom, adjourned two hours for relaxation; and the brief separation nearly proved fatal to freedom. The municipal authorities, on receiving intelligence of Robespierre's arrest, immediately gave the signal for an insurrection which had been some days in preparation. The tocsin again sounded, the barriers were closed, the jailers commanded to refuse the prisoners, and Coffinhal, the vice-president of the Jacobin club, was despatched with a powerful force to release them. These orders were quickly executed; Robespierre and his associates soon re-entered the city hall in triumph; and Henriot advanced with his troops to besiege or arrest the Convention in turn. But the success of the conspirators was transient. The courage of the senate, the incapacity, or cowardice of the rebel commander, and the reluctance of his soldiers, frustrated the intended attack. With a devotedness worthy of a better man, though not of a

Their Rescue, Recapture, and Execution.

* Lacretelle, xii. 103; Mignet, ii. 102. † Thiers, vi. 491.

CHAP. VII. better cause, Collot D'Herbois threw himself into the president's chair, and expressed a resolution to die
 1794. with the assembly in the hall. The energy of active soon succeeded to the fortitude of passive desperation; and a decree for the outlaw of the conspirators at once disarmed the troops and dispersed the assailants. Disobeyed by his cannoneers, who refused to fire on the chamber, Henriot sought safety in flight. The Convention quickly appointed a leader to pursue the insurgents, and despatched deputies to propitiate the sections. Some of the latter introducing themselves amongst the populace, raised a cry of "Long live the Convention!"* and others repeating it, the tide was soon turned in the legislature's favour. Abandoned by the greater part of their military, and deserted by the whole of their civic supporters, Robespierre and his associates soon found that popularity would not shield them in the hour of danger; and were seized in the city hall, but not until they had nearly fallen by suicidal attempts or mutual assaults. When capture became inevitable, their leader endeavoured to avoid the vengeance of his foes by an effort of his own; but, destitute of that courage which rarely deserts the coward in the last moments of despair, he failed to give the weapon a mortal aim, and the contents of the pistol escaped through an innocuous wound in his cheek†. An attempt of his brother to retreat through a window was equally unsuccessful; the injury he sustained, in common with Henriot, whom Coffinhal precipitated headlong for his cowardice, precluded escape; and both were soon afterwards discovered, one concealed in a cellar, the other in a sewer. St. Just alone

* Mignet, ii. 110.

† According to another, but less authentic account, he received this wound from one of the assailants.

exhibited inflexible intrepidity, and the paralytic Couthon helpless imbecility, when the troops of the Convention burst into the room and conveyed the whole as prisoners to the legislative hall. But the triumphant assembly with indignant acclamation refused them admission: and as the act of outlawry superseded the necessity of trial, they were quickly consigned to the scaffold; Fouquier Tinville displaying even more zeal in hurrying their execution than on the previous day he had evinced in the destruction of their victims. After passing the night, with resolute taciturnity, on a bench in the chamber of the Committee whose most formidable foe he lately had been, exposed to the gaze and outrages of the crowds who flocked to insult the fallen triumvir—suffering perhaps still more from past recollections and present remorse, from his own more than from public reproach,—Robespierre, with the younger and comparatively innocent fanatic of the name, and Henriot, half dead of their wounds; Couthon nearly as prostrated by palsy and despair, and St. Just, who to the last maintained an undaunted deportment, was next morning arraigned before the revolutionary tribunal; and after the formal establishment of identity, which alone, in the instance of outlaws, was necessary to authorize a sentence of death, he was, in the afternoon, conducted with sixteen of his humbler associates, to the Place of the Revolution, where he expired amidst the execrations of an infuriated populace, almost every member of whom mourned some victim of his cruelty. The people hailed with derision his fallen power; and treated the friends of the tyrant as the foes of mankind. Invectives pursued his progress to the guillotine, and his body to the grave; but he was alike heedless of the one, and

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CHAP. insensible to the other. Though every tongue was
VII. raised to curse, every hand to strike, a momentary
 1794. exclamation of agony, when the bandage was rudely
 torn by the executioner from his lacerated cheek,
 was the only sound that broke the imperturbable
 silence which he maintained from the moment of his
 apprehension till the last hour of his existence; and
 after being doomed to witness the whole of his con-
 federates expire like recreants, with the exception of
 St. Just, he died with more courage than might have
 been anticipated from the cowardice of his life.*

Character
 of the Tri-
 umvirate.

39. So perished the last of that dread triumvirate,
 in whose character we almost in vain search for the
 slightest ray of virtue to relieve the sablest shades of
 vice. The record of evil deeds proverbially survives
 the life of the perpetrator; while the recollection of
 beneficence is usually consigned with the benefactor
 to the tomb. Fallen men have generally some
 claims to sympathy; but though mercy is a noble
 attribute, justice is a virtue nobler still; and in this
 instance it is equally difficult to find any palliation
 for their atrocities while living, or to cast additional
 obloquy on their memories when dead. Their eleva-
 tion was base, their end was befitting: in the in-
 stance of each, scarce a month intervened between
 his triumph and his fall. But though it is agreeable
 to recollect that such is the natural connexion of
 guilt and punishment, it is deplorable to reflect that
 similar crimes and like hypocrisy generally acquire
 equal ascendance in the fortunes of the world.
 Whether considered individually or in the aggregate,
 no tyrants ever more justly aroused the indignation
 of contemporaries, or have more deservedly incurred
 the abhorrence of posterity. And yet their cha-

* Toulangeon, iv. 382-391; Lacretelle, xii. 119, 120; Mignet, ii. 113.

racter is not one of unmitigated guilt. The timid yet ambitious, inhuman but incorruptible Robespierre, is one of the most inexplicable characters in history. Devoid alike of human affection and human sympathy, yet so devoured by the weakest of human passions, that the blood he so profusely shed in the zenith of his power flowed less from innate cruelty and unbounded ambition, than to appease vanity mortified by the ridicule of his wretched oratory and grovelling thoughts, when, as a humble provincial advocate, he commenced his career. The truculence of Danton was free, but that of Robespierre sprang from personal malevolence not less than Marat's from universal hatred. The reckless hardihood with which the first moved amid the sanguinary scenes he created, and his designed clemency to the vanquished, must extort involuntary homage; but in the others there are no such redeeming traits. Their antipathy to danger was equalled only by their appetite for blood. In moments of peril they fled to their retreats as eagerly as he rushed to participate in the strife; and their resentment terminated only with the lives of their opponents. Yet when his vengeance was satiated, the cruelty of Robespierre proceeded less from thirst for slaughter than from indifference to carnage; and it is probable he intended to restore that moderation which was wholly irreconcilable with the frenzied enthusiasm of Marat. Nor were their private more dissimilar than their public lives. In Marat and Danton we see incarnations of the fiercest passions, and most degrading debaucheries. The brutality of the former was not less conspicuous in the senate than when he appeared as a veterinarian in the stables of Count D'Artois; and the profligacy of the latter, though

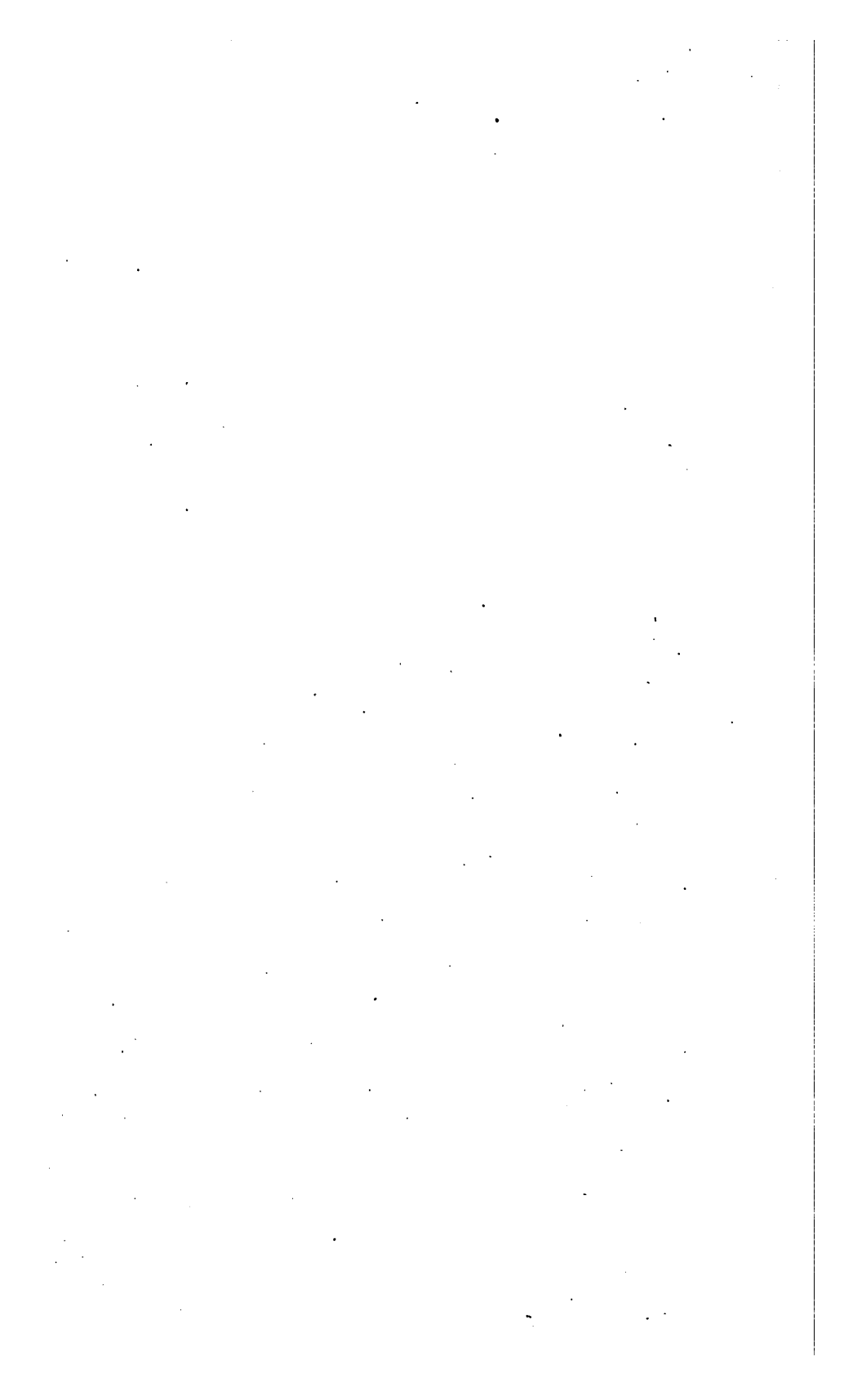
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ultimately modified by elevated circumstances, and divested of its original coarseness, was equally evident from the first to the latest hour of his public existence. But Robespierre was of a nature more refined and cold : he viewed with disgust the demeanour of the one and the depravity of the other ; and even in the moments when he sedulously flattered the populace, he maintained a distance in his deportment, and a demarcation in his dress,* which secured him a greater influence with the debased beings he addressed than all the degrading familiarity of his rivals ; while his austere integrity, and exemption from personal depravity, not only increased his power while living, but leave posterity in doubt whether he died a consummate hypocrite or a martyred patriot. Yet private virtues cannot extenuate public vice ; although private vice may not extinguish public virtue : and though the morality of Robespierre, the clemency of Danton, and disinterest of Marat may be cited in palliation of their crimes, and all of them were perhaps insensibly led into guilt from which they might have originally shrunk, such considerations cannot influence the verdict, nor arrest the judgment of history, which consigns them to deathless infamy in future ages.

* Robespierre never imitated the *sans-culottes*, or rabble, in his apparel ; but was distinguished from the populace not less by the delicacy of his dress than by the distance of his demeanour.





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